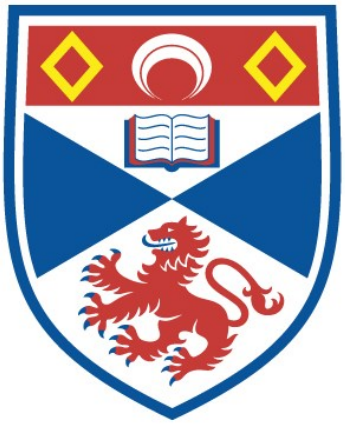
CONTINUITY IN INTERMITTENT ORGANISATIONS: THE ORGANISING PRACTICES OF FESTIVAL AND COMMUNITY OF A UK FILM FESTIVAL

Elizabeth Jean Irvine

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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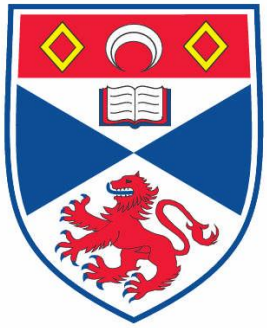

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the relationship between practices, communities and continuity in intermittent organisational arrangements. Cultural festivals are argued to offer one such particularly rich and nuanced research context; within this study their potential to transcend intermittent enactment emerged as a significant avenue of enquiry. The engagement of organisation studies with theories of practice has produced a rich practice-based corpus, diverse in both theoretical concerns and empirical approaches to the study of practice. Nevertheless, continuity presents an, as yet, under-theorised aspect of this field. Thus, the central questions of this thesis concern: the practices that underpin the enactment of festivals; the themes emerging from these practices for further consideration; and relationships between festivals and the wider context within which they are enacted. These issues were explored empirically through a qualitative study of the enactment of a community-centred film festival. Following from the adoption of a 'practice-lens approach', this study yielded forty-eight practices, through which to explore five themes emerging from analysis: *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting* and *Negotiating Boundaries*. This study revealed an aspect of the wider field of practice that has not yet been fully examined by practice-based studies: the cementing or anchoring mechanisms that contribute to temporal continuity in intermittent, temporary or project-based organisations. The findings of this thesis suggest a processual model, which collectively reinforces an organisational memory that survives periods of latency and facilitates the re-emergence of practice, thus potentially enabling organisations to endure across intermittent enactment and, ultimately, transcend temporality and ephemerality. The themes examined and insights offered in this thesis seek to contribute to: practice-based studies and film-festival studies; forging a new path linking these two disciplines; and generating both theoretical and practical insights of interest to festival organisers and stakeholders of project-based, temporary or intermittent organisational arrangements.

DECLARATIONS

1. Candidate's declarations:

I, Elizabeth Jean Irvine, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80'000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2009 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in November 2010; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2010 and 2014.

Date Signature of candidate

2. Supervisor's declaration:

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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Signature of supervisor

Dedicated in loving memory to my beautiful,
kind and inspiring mother, Aileen.

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I am also very grateful to my examiners, Dr Caroline Ramsey and Dr Ruth Woodfield, for all the time and energy that they invested in engaging with my thesis. I very much enjoyed and value the discussion that we had together.

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Having been an undergraduate, postgraduate, research student and tutor at St Andrews, I have been fortunate to learn from a wider circle of academics and friends and to have met a number of fantastic people throughout my life here. So, finally, thank you also to everyone else that has helped me along the way: the School of Management (especially Dr John Desmond, Diane McGoldrick, Dr Lynn Christie, Professor Rob Gray and Dr Gail Greig); my friends Dr Holly Patrick, Dr Susan Eldred, Dr Henning Berthold, Dr Jonathan Cooper, Dr Naomi McLeod, Hampus Adamsson, Dr Christian Grahle, Rachel Robertson, Iain Brown, Rebecca Leitch, Kate Sturgeon and Dusty; and my 'Arbroath family', Maureen, Jessie and Ian.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Building upon seminal texts by Caves (2000), Florida (2002) and Hesmondhalgh (2002), examination of the creative industries [hereafter CI] is now a thriving field of management research. The CI exhibit unique dimensions for scholarly analysis and offer alternative vistas from which to consider organisational phenomena. This thesis argues that festivals in particular, characterised by *intermittent enactment*, present an inherently complex organisational form that ultimately offers a rich and nuanced research context. This thesis will also illuminate how cultural festivals hold a central and multifaceted social, cultural, political and economic role and, as with the CI more generally, 'exert an extraordinary influence on our values, our attitudes, and our life styles' (Lampel *et al.*, 2000: 263).

Echoing a wider 'practice turn' within organisation studies (Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011: 165), the adoption of a practice-based approach was considered apt in the exploration of such a multifarious and seemingly 'temporary' organisational form. A 'practice-lens' was selected in order to both elicit a rich data set and, given the complex institutional context within which festivals are enacted, to also bring the relationships and connections that criss-cross such organisations to the fore. Indeed, practice presents a productive framework through which to interpret the 'meaning-making, identity-forming and order-producing activities' at play within any organisation (Nicolini, 2011: 602). Furthermore, the interrelations between practices and also between practice and its wider institutional/societal context are explored herein as a promising area of study. These activities, relationships and other emergent issues were explored empirically through a qualitative study of the enactment of a community-centred film festival: the 26th London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival [hereafter LLGFF], held annually at the British Film Institute [hereafter BFI].

Following from the analysis presented within this study, this thesis will argue that festivals are characterised by *intermittent enactment*, cultural exchange and intricate multi-layered and multifarious networks of practice and agents. Festival scholars such as Rüling and Pederson (2010) and Iordanova (2009) have previously noted the potential lack of 'permanence' that results from a festival's status/enactment as a temporary organisation. Yet, until now, the processes that bolster continuity have remained relatively unexplored. Furthermore, temporary organisations have been

highlighted as understudied within organisation studies (Bechky, 2006). Thus, this thesis considers the relationship between practices, communities and continuity in such intermittent organisational arrangements, and the central questions of this thesis concern: the enactment of festivals (as temporary organisations); the processes that underpin their *continued* enactment; the cementing and anchoring mechanisms that bolster continuity; and the relationship between the festival and its constituent communities and wider institutional context.

This research project adopted an interpretivist approach and, paralleling many contemporary practice-based studies, an ensemble of data-collection techniques (semi-structured interviews, observation and artefact-collation) was employed. This ten-day festival attracted around 21000 attendees and fieldwork was primarily conducted during the festival itself, from Friday 23 March 2012 to Sunday 1 April 2012. The period considered in the collation of documents and artefacts, however, extended from 1 March 2011 to 30 April 2012 in order to examine a full 'festival year'. Inductive iterative coding, clustering and analysis of transcribed and collated data yielded an assemblage of forty-eight practices. Practice is temporal, situated, embedded in the research context (Gomez & Bounty, 2011: 934) and irreducible to a collection of discrete entities. Thus, as will be discussed, following from a 'practice-lens' approach, the initial research aim was not to explore an a priori designated line of enquiry but, rather, to develop categorisations of practices that would elicit emergent themes through which to explore these practices and their interconnections. Through examination of the five themes generated — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting* and *Negotiating Boundaries* — the embedded and relational nature of practice emerges for and becomes subject to scholarly analysis, rather than the closed identification of discrete de-contextualised practices.

The annual iteration of the LLGFF could be described in terms of a succession of film screenings and industry, community or film-related events. However, such a narrow interpretation of the LLGFF — as a series of discrete events or singular iterations — belies the complex wider organisation of the festival and its permanence, as opposed to transience, in both space and time. Through the tracing of the forty-eight practices identified, this thesis has revealed an aspect of the wider field of practice that

has not yet been fully examined by practice-based studies: the cementing or anchoring mechanisms that contribute to temporal continuity in intermittent, temporary or project-based organisations. The practices identified and presented herein constitute a processual model conceptualised as presenting five robust and indispensible strands (relating to the five themes explored — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting* and *Negotiating Boundaries* and most concretely grounded in the practices and activities of safeguarding). These strands of activity and understandings collectively reinforce an organisational memory that survives periods of latency and facilitates the re-emergence of practice, thus enabling organisations to endure across intermittent enactment and, ultimately, to transcend temporality and ephemerality. Furthermore, this thesis has illuminated the significance of the festival as an archiver of and conduit for queer culture, and also how the enactment of the practices identified herein have a generative affect upon the queer-film industry, the wider LGBTQ community and the festival itself.

The themes examined and insights offered in this thesis seek to contribute to: theoretical bodies of literature within practice-based studies and film-festival studies; forging a new path linking these two disciplines; and generating both theoretical and practical insights of interest to the research site, film-festival organisers, those charged with staging festivals more generally, and stakeholders of project-based or temporary organisations.

The structure and organisation of this thesis is outlined below.

- **'Chapter II: Literature Review'** begins with an introductory description of the researcher's journey towards the research site. The remainder of the chapter considers the two central bodies of literature that underpin this thesis and is accordingly divided into two major sections. The first provides a contextual literature review relating to the research site, presenting material relevant to the consideration of festivals, film-festivals and community-centred festivals. The second offers a critical overview of the principal theoretical lens utilised in this study: theories of practice.
- **'Chapter III: Methodology'** elucidates the methodological approach adopted in this study, elaborating upon: the research context, aims and strategy; the

researcher's position as a situated knower; and the specific methods of data collection and analysis employed.

- The central body of this thesis resides in **'Chapter IV: Findings'**, which examines the practices identified and emergent themes developed through analysis, as well as indicating links between and within them.
- **'Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions'** critically examines the practices, themes and linkages between them identified and discussed in the previous chapter. It outlines both thematic-based and general theoretical and practical insights that can be offered as contributions from this study (practical insights specific to the organisation of study are provided in the format of a report within the Appendices). It also presents an integrative discussion that links together the most significant contributions of this study, in particular the identification and consideration of the cementing and anchoring mechanisms that contribute to community-building and continuity in intermittent organisations. It further indicates the conclusions of this study, provides some comments upon the limitations of this thesis, presents some reflections upon the research process, and highlights some potentially fruitful directions for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the central bodies of literature and fields of study that underpin this research project. Nevertheless, in introducing such literatures, it is prudent to first consider the pre-research experiences of the researcher — those significant moments, events, familiarities and encounters — that ultimately shaped the selection of this research context. This is explored overleaf in section 1 'Diegesis: My Journey Towards this Research Project'. The main body of this chapter resides in its second and third sections. The second section, 'Mise-en-scène: Festivals', develops a panorama of literature pertaining to the research context within which this study is located: film festivals. This second section will be organised in a manner that 'funnels' inwards with increasingly specific relevance to the research context. Departing from an initial brief outline of festivals as temporary creative enterprises, the second section will then go on to consider: film festivals; LGBTQ communities and queer film festivals; and, finally, the relationship between festivals and their constituent communities of creatives, audience-members and wider queer (film-industry-/) community-based stakeholders. The third section, 'Framing: Theories of Practice', presents a critical overview of the principal theoretical lens utilised in this study. It first provides a contextual overview in order to situate theories of practice before: considering their myriad philosophical underpinnings, examining elements of practice, indicating current theoretical concerns and some key limitations of this field. Finally, a summary section will present promising areas of study at the intersections of theories of practice, festivals (as intermittent organisations) and LGBTQ/community-based festivals.

1 – DIEGESIS: MY JOURNEY TOWARDS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

Given the interpretative nature of this research project, it is pertinent at this introductory point to reflect upon the researcher's journey towards this research context and topic. My interest in the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, and journey towards considering it as a fruitful research site, stems from series of significant academic, personal and cultural experiences, all of which contribute to the 'pre-understanding' that shapes interpretation (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 9). Aspects of these experiences are broadly outlined below and, where relevant, expanded upon at appropriate junctures later in this thesis (see, in particular, 'The Researcher as a Situated Knower' within section 3.2 of Chapter 'III: Methodology').

Towards the end of my undergraduate studies in Management, I undertook two modules that had a considerable impact upon my understanding of and interest in 'organisations'. Firstly, Dr. Tim Scott's 'Advertising: A Social History' prompted reflection upon the relationship between organisations and cultural norms and expression (indeed, these relationships within the context of minority communities became the subject of my undergraduate dissertation). Secondly, Prof. Barbara Townley's 'Creative Industries' impelled students to consider a broad range of organisational forms and the dynamic uncertainty of the creative and cultural industries (when compared with the relative stability and logic of many other sectors and the assumed and implicit nature of organisational 'longevity').

Experiences and engagements of personal significance also guided me towards this research context. I have an enduring interest in and connection with LGBTQ culture and communities, manifest in some of the following ways: ten years of involvement with LGBTQ community groups; attendance at myriad LGBTQ cultural events/festivals and community events such as Pride and World Pride; my previous community-based elected roles, such as 'President' and 'Vice-President' of the University of St Andrews LGBT Society (and involvement for several more years as a more 'peripheral' committee member) and 'Sexualities and Gender' elected member of the University of

St Andrews Students' Representative Council; attendance (as a nominated delegate) at a large national public-sector conference, the LGBT National Health Summit; and my role as co-founder and current 'organising committee' member of a LGBT Alumni Association. I have also been involved in organising special events for LGBT History Month and in arranging the donation of historic LGBT Society materials to the Glasgow Women's Library for archiving and safekeeping. I also have an interest in the academic consideration of sexuality and queer communities, and also the bodies of work that contribute to queer theory.

My passion for LGBTQ culture (and cultural expression and consumption) naturally met some time ago with my more general interest in film to forge an enduring interest in queer cinema. My general curiosity regarding cinema and identity was transformed into a more critical interest through academic engagement with film studies. During my postgraduate M.Res degree I made use of an elective module 'slot' to undertake a course taught by the School of Modern Languages, 'Film and Issues of European Identity'. I then utilised my M.Res dissertation to examine sexuality and its expression or concealment within the context of the workplace through film. Furthermore, during the first year of my research degree I went on to audit eighty credits of Film Studies modules, sixty of which were part of the M.Litt Film Studies degree. On a more personal note, my long standing interest in queer cinema is manifest in a substantial personal collection of queer cinema titles, some of which are relatively rare (given their often extremely limited DVD release). This fascination also resulted in my attendance at an international cinema/literature-centred queer theory conference (including a keynote lecture by Prof. Jack Halberstam) in 2008. Crucially, I also attended an international LGBTQ film festival, *Lesgaicinemad*, in 2007 and 2008 in Madrid, which led to my eventual attendance at the 25th LLGFF in 2011 prior to this research project.

Ever since my first experience of the exhilarating (engineered?) chaos on the streets of Edinburgh during its infamous Fringe Festival, I have always been fascinated by festivals. Cultural festivals are complex organisations that I believe invite contemplation of organisational phenomena and prompt a number of questions relating to their enactment, appeal, value, accountability, 'ownership', audience engagement,

stakeholder management and, indeed, their success, lineage, evolution and vulnerability. As will be explored throughout this thesis, in the case of cultural festivals or events that are centred around a particular community (with their own somewhat distinctive sub-/cultures, histories, traditions or socio-political concerns) such phenomena become, arguably, more complicated. Beyond celebrating or showcasing a particular artistic form such festivals/events involve an additional layering: celebration or exploration of community, culture, memory and identity.

As a consequence of my community engagements, I was struck some time ago by the curiously vulnerable nature of LGBTQ 'community' (which will be further considered throughout this thesis). Moreover, in my experience, for reasons outlined in section 2.3 of 'Chapter II: Literature Review', LGBTQ organisations/groups and even cultural/arts festivals or prides are often characterised by an ebb and flow in terms of their activities, reach, legitimacy and impact (and sometimes disappear altogether!). For instance, in my time at university I have witnessed huge variation in terms of the scope and success of the LGBT Society. Another particularly poignant example relates to my visit to Aberdeen Pride, 'Rainbowfest', in 2008. The event was cancelled on the day without warning, sparking wild rumours and speculation but also prompting LGBTQ commercial venues and community groups to pull together and host an ad hoc alternative 'pride' and after party. Perhaps of greatest significance, I attended the 25th LLGFF (for the full duration) in 2011, enacted amidst huge controversy regarding large financial cuts and a consequentially slashed festival duration (see section 1 of 'Chapter III: Methodology'). This was my first visit but it was impossible not to discern the subdued yet still celebratory atmosphere and to begin to perceive the intriguing complexities of ownership and community entanglements of this festival.

Overall, I was already somewhat enculturated to (aspects of) LGBTQ communities and the LLGFF represented an organisation that I sensed would offer a rich nuanced research context. I was also aware of the exciting nascent field of Film Festival Studies and of the potential for interdisciplinary research with Management. Ultimately, the aspects, experiences and engagements considered above (and subsequent reflections upon them) guided my journey towards this research context and, coupled with the insights that emerged from data analysis, led to my exploration in this

thesis of the cementing and anchoring mechanisms that contribute to community-building and continuity in intermittent organisations (particularly, within the context of somewhat vulnerable communities).

2 – MISE-EN-SCÈNE: FESTIVALS

In any attempt to explore the complex interrelations between practices and also between practices and their wider institutional/societal context, it is pertinent to first consider the lived stage upon which practice is enacted. This chapter section therefore aims to provide a concise contextual literature review that funnels inwards with increasing relevance to the research context: a community-centred film festival. Thus, the following sub-sections will: provide a brief outline of festivals as temporary creative organisations (2.1); present some key salient points relating to film festivals (2.2); address LGBTQ communities and examine LGBTQ-film festivals in particular (2.3); and, finally, broadly consider the relationship between festivals and their constituent communities.

2.1 - FESTIVALS

By virtue of their differentiated mechanisms of production and consumption, organisations within the CI operate in a complex environment, subject to a number of particular challenges and characterised by a crucial balancing of aesthetic and commercial concerns (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005).[1] Lampel *et al.* suggest five polarities that organisations in the cultural industries must navigate in dealing with 'a combination of ambiguity and dynamism, both of which are intrinsic to goods that serve an aesthetic or expressive purpose' (2000: 263). These polarities are indicated below and serve as a useful vista upon the CI. Lampel *et al.* argue that organisations must: (i) balance fostering and expression of artistic values against the need to attend to 'economics of mass entertainment'; (ii) seek novelty through 'product' differentiation without moving too far from the existing market; (iii) address existing demand whilst imaginatively extending/transforming their market share; and (iv) seek to secure equilibrium between the advantages of vertical integration and the creative vitality fostered through flexible specialisation. Finally, (v) they attest that managers should seek to build creative systems to support and market cultural products without suppressing individual 'inspiration', which they argue is the ultimate root of value creation in the cultural industries (2000: 265-268).[2]

An aspect not considered within Lampel *et al.*'s framework is that the CI incorporates many forms of temporary organisation: both project-based and intermittent (i.e. see Bettiol & Sedita's 2011 consideration of project-based organisations and Parker's 2011 consideration of the circus, respectively). However, Bechky highlights that much current scholarship addressing temporary organisations applauds the flexibility that it affords (2006: 4) without giving due consideration to the consequences that flow from its: 'ephemeral' nature (3); lack of permanent structure and hierarchy (5);

[1] Caves famously outlined seven economic principles that differentiate the CI, including: nobody knows, art for art's sake, the motley crew, infinite variety, Alist/Blist, time flies and *ars longa* (2000).
[2] Additionally, Puhl *et al.* identify seven key trends in consumer behaviour that they argue cultural institutions must attend to, including the increase of: (i) collective forms of consumption; (ii) sensory involvement; (iii) institutional acknowledgement of spectators' desire to be actively involved (or even shape their own experience); (iv) mixing of intellectual and hedonistic motives, or the 'quest for *edutainment*'; (v) mixing genres and paradoxical consumption; (vi) (hypermodernity-fuelled) consumer desire for immediacy; and (vii) integration of new technologies in consumption (2008: 4-14).

and reliance upon 'networks of relationships' (3) and 'emergent practices' to 'coordinate and control activity' (5). As this thesis will illuminate, Parker's description of the annual re-staging of the circus is somewhat analogous with the festival research site: 'it usually assembles its singular organization once a year, [...] employing various people from a network of performers and labourers and adding them to a core of people who are the same from year to year' (2011: 563).

Cultural festivals are a global phenomenon and increasingly ubiquitous organisational form. Notably, however, authors such as Getz (2010) argue that there is no widely accepted typology of what a festival 'is'. This is further compounded by the variety of fields from which festivals are explored (e.g. CI, tourism/events studies, film-festival studies etc.). In their 2006 study, d'Astous *et al.*, indicate that there were over forty-thousand festivals listed in just one searchable database.[3] Following from Getz (1991), d'Astous *et al.* propose the following definition of a cultural festival: a 'public thematic celebration that takes place usually once a year within a predetermined period of time' (2006: 14). Festivals can be international, national or local in scope and impact,[4] and there are numerous axes and criteria along which festivals may be considered and subsequently categorised. In their study of the economic function of festivals, Orosa Paleo and Wijnberg, for instance, propose a taxonomy based upon seven elements: character, purpose, range, format, degree of institutionalisation, degree of innovativeness, and scope (2006). They propose two coexisting economic purposes of (music) festivals: production, distribution and retailing; and signalling, certifying and classifying (2006: 50). In a similar vein, d'Astous *et al*. (2006) proposed a scale for measuring the 'personality' of cultural festivals utilising the following five axes of appraisal: dynamism, sophistication, reputation, openness to the world, and innovation.

Hibbert *et al.* (2007) offer a fruitful framework through which to consider festivals, one that is rooted in practice and considers both 'places, processes and people' and also 'content' (2). They propose that festivals can be examined according to the following dimensions or 'situations of practice' (3): as rooted in a particular place or peripatetic; hosting centralised or multi-venue activities; 'owned' in some manner by

[3] The authors reference the USA-based website <www.festivals.com>.
[4] As noted by Rüling and Pederson in relation to film festivals (2010: 318).

another entity or 'passed on' (the authors note that the latter is rare however, given the present study, a relevant example could be proposed as LGBTQ Pride celebrations); and 'independent or publically-sponsored and directed' (3-4). They further add that consideration should be given to 'content that is carried and enacted within festivals' (5).

Following from his systematic large-scale review, Getz (2010) proposes that within management studies the consideration of festivals can be broadly split according to three discourses: (1) roles, meanings and impacts of festivals in society and culture; (2) festival tourism; and (3) festival management. Crucially, his approach is grounded in events-management and events-related literature. This is reflected in both his attribution of interest in the first discourse to anthropologists and sociologists and the weighting of his literature review towards journals such as *Event Management*, *Journal of Travel Research* and *Tourism Management*.

Nevertheless, scholars argue that (beyond tourism and their management) festivals are a vital focus of study given the important role they play for communities (d'Astous *et al.*, 2006: 15) and in the creation of spaces where industry members can 'meet, construct reputation, and constitute and contest shared frames of reference' (Rüling, 2009: 49). Furthermore, festivals provide a point of connection between artists and consumers (Orosa Paleo & Wijnberg, 2006: 51, following from Hirsch, 2000). Additionally, cultural goods are 'experiential' (Lampel *et al.*, 2000: 264) and both derive value from and are consumed through their subjective interpretation (Lawrence & Philips, 2002: 431). Thus, notions of quality and its assessment are ambiguous (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005: 1032; Lampel *et al.*, 2000: 264), meaning that festivals potentially signal information regarding the quality of cultural goods to consumers (Orosa Paleo & Wijnberg, 2006: 53).

2.2 - FILM FESTIVALS

> ***"For more than three quarters of a century, film festivals have been a driving force behind the global circulation of cinema."***
>
> *(Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009: 1)*

Although it is impossible to accurately quantify the prevalence of film festivals [hereafter FF], scholars agree that their numbers are increasing exponentially. In 2003 one researcher estimated the total to be '700' (Moulier, 2003; in Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009: 1) and by 2010 'industry experts' placed the figure considerably higher: a global total of '3500' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 318; see also Archibald & Miller, 2011). However, scholarly examination of the inherently complex phenomena of FF has only become a field in its own right relatively recently (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319; de Valck & Loist, 2009: 179). This was notably reflected in the launch of (and, in part, fuelled by) the *Film Festival Yearbook* series in 2009.[5]

FF scholarship should not be conflated with film criticism or film studies. It instead represents an 'inherently interdisciplinary field' that offers 'meta-views and frameworks for understanding festivals in broader *and* more specific contexts' (de Valck & Loist, 2009: 180, emphasis in original). To date, FF scholarship has generally followed a case-study approach (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009: 1). Notably, the first instalment of the aforementioned *Film Festival Yearbook* series included an admirable attempt by de Valck and Loist (2009) to map the existing terrain of film-festival studies [hereafter FFS]. In garnering an overview of FFS, it is useful here to indicate the ten dominant themes that they suggest characterise current FFS research: (i) a meta perspective or 'long view'; (ii) awards, juries and critics; (iii) space: cities, tourism and public spheres; (iv) the red carpet: spectacle, stars and glamour; (v) business: industries, distribution and markets; (vi) trans/national cinemas; (vii) programming; (viii) reception: audiences, communities and cinephiles; (ix) specialised film festivals; and (x)

[5] Dina Iordanova, Professor of Film Studies at the University of St Andrews, is the principal editor.

publications dedicated to individual film festivals. Ultimately, as de Valck and Loist state, FFS:

> *takes a cultural-studies approach, reframing interests in film aesthetics, art and the role of national [sic – 'national cinemas'] and festivals as sites of self-identification and community building. It acknowledges above all the political and economic context of film production and distribution and understands film festivals both as players in the film industry and, conversely, as events in which various stakeholders are involved.*
>
> (2009: 180)

This budding field has not been without criticism. Caldwell warns against 'top-down' theorising by industry experts and academics, which neglects the potential contribution of 'non-scripted participants'[6] (or those with less high-status roles) to more 'genuine' theorising (2009, 168-169). Furthermore, Harbord critiqued the predominance of a FFS focus upon spatial aspects of festivals, at the expense of other interesting aspects such as time (2009: 40). Similarly, Rüling and Pederson suggest that FFS have, to date, been concerned with the things that flow from a festival (e.g. the role of festivals in national cinema, transnational spaces etc.) rather than examination of festivals themselves (2010: 318). Interestingly, several FFS scholars have suggested that the field would significantly benefit from greater 'lateral' cross-disciplinary research agendas, notably singling out management or organisation studies in particular (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319; de Valck & Loist, 2009: 215; Rüling, 2009: 50; Brown, 2009: 222). Rüling further indicated that existing '[p]ublished research on film festivals from an organisational perspective is scarce' (2009: 50).

Film festivals are complex entities that comprise a multitude of facets, including: screenings, competitions, master-classes, thematic programmes, showcase presentations, markets for co-production/distribution/recruitment, social events (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319) and also industry-serving non-public closed screenings (McGill, 2011: 283). In form, festivals can be understood as 'temporary organisations' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319) that may 'lack in permanence' (Iordanova, 2009: 26). Nevertheless, looking beyond this, conceptually FF can be argued to 'possess their own

[6] Caldwell suggests that the top tiers of festival organisers and programmers, used to giving press/media interviews, mostly share rehearsed or somewhat manufactured and contrived statements with researchers (2009). As will be shown, this study incorporated participants from across the festival.

economies, social-economic drivers, professional and political dynamics, and agendas' (Archibald & Miller, 2011: 249) and to operate 'at the intersection of art, commerce, technology, culture, identity, power, politics and ideology' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319). Festivals are spaces in which conflicting economic and aesthetic values and interests (amongst others) are negotiated (Rhyne, 2009: 16; Rüling & Pederson[7], 2010: 319-321), presenting fruitful opportunities for scholarly research in a dynamic and shifting environment.

De Valck and Loist propose that FF should be considered as '*sites of intersecting discourses and practices*'[8] (2009: 180, emphasis in original) and propose a model through which to consider the intersection of six different axes within the FF realm. These are: (i) aesthetic discourse, or, 'film as art-work'; (ii) the economic continuum 'organised along flows of capital' from production to distribution; (iii) the festival as an institution, involving people, funding and operational mechanisms; (iv) reception; (v) politics of place; and (vi) outward flowing connections to the wider festival network and the historical development of any individual festival (2009: 180-184). To some extent, programming is responsive to curatorial decisions within this wider festival network (Lee & Stringer, 2012: 302) but, arguably, festival programmes are shaped/fed more by direct submissions and personal networking (Iordanova, 2009: 31).

Festivals 'do more than simply showcase the "best" of a year's crop' (Rastegar, 2012: 311). Relating to the second axis proposed by de Valck and Loist, the economic impact of festivals has attracted a significant proportion of research activity within this budding field. Critiquing the then pervasive understanding of the festival circuit as a form of 'alternative distribution network' for film, Iordanova stressed that this perspective does not stand up to 'economic appraisal' (2009: 23-24). Thus, the 'flow' of films through the festival network does not equate to distribution but may create value (although not necessarily monetary reward) through esteem or enhanced recognition (24-25). In a similar vein, festivals can play an active role in the film industry beyond 'exhibition' through activities such as funding (de Valck & Loist, 2009: 184).

[7] Notably, audiences are not included in Rüling and Pederson's list of stakeholders.
[8] The use of the term 'practice' does not refer to the same 'theories of practice' outlined in this chapter but to the more commonplace sense of 'practice'.

Furthermore, research within the nascent field of FFS has begun to unveil the multi-layered cultural impact of festivals. For instance, tendrils of influence have been traced outwards into (and backwards from) the: functioning of other aspects of film culture (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009: 2); representative capacity of FF, which 'always [...] reflect an ideology' (Brown, 2009: 219); ways in which programming can shape our access to films by influencing film-based media attention and industry deal-making (Rastegar, 2012: 311-312); and the potential of FF to 'actively define film culture on local and global scales by cultivating public notions of quality and taste' (311). Given the experiential nature of films, this final point relates to the role that critics may play throughout the CI in shaping wider consumption through operating as 'mediators of audience/consumer response' (Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005: 1032, referencing Shrum, 1991). Ultimately, the study of FF offers the possibility to 'greatly improve our understanding of creative industry events at the crossroads of art and commerce, multiple artistic, cultural and organisational identities, and at the intersection of local creative clusters and global project networks' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 322).

2.3 - LGBTQ COMMUNITIES & 'QUEER' FILM FESTIVALS

As reflected in de Valck and Loist's 2009 panorama of FFS, *specialist* FF form a significant facet of the FF phenomenon and provide an attractive and nuanced research context for FFS. Globally, the range of specialist FF includes thematic-based (e.g. genre [horror], star or ideology [feminist]), format-based (e.g. short or documentary) and identity-based FF (e.g. nationality, race, ethnicity, religion and sexuality), amongst others. As will be explored in this thesis, identity-based FF are of particular interest given the 'significant role' that they can play 'in not only bringing together films but also defining and shaping a community' (Rastegar, 2009: 481). The research site selected is indivisible from LGBTQ communities and culture and, accordingly, this sub-section shall briefly consider significant aspects of LGBTQ communities prior to an examination of queer-film festivals (a brief note on the study of sexuality is provided in sub-section 3.2 of 'Chapter III: Methodology').

LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

Contrary to the suggested cohesiveness of the oft-cited moniker 'the gay community', members of this population are linked only by non-adherence to (hetero)normative sexual practice and/or gender. In fact, this population is diverse (in terms of interests, sexuality, gender-expression, values, politics etc.), dispersed and varies individually as to outward expression of sexuality and (desire for) engagement/identification with LGBTQ cultures and communities. Furthermore, community members do not necessarily possess a 'static' sexual identity and, thus, their identification with different sub-cultures may shift over time with changing interests or an evolving sexual identity. Furthermore, this community is characterised by intermittent 'active' membership as, over and above individual 'identification' (as queer, L, G, B or T for instance), individuals may drift in and out of the 'community' and involvement or engagement with LGBTQ politics, culture(s), sites or organisations. Nevertheless, although fractured along a myriad of sub-cultural lines and possessing

undeniably blurred contours and edges, the somewhat labyrinthine 'LGBTQ' community is a unique repository of and crucial point of connection for us to our peers, queer culture and our shared histories.

For this fractured community, the transmission, expression and consumption of our shared histories and cultures is vital yet, this is hampered by the fragility of and often transient nature of points of connection with the community. Unlike communities linked through shared and meaningful spaces or familial bonds, this fractured population lacks a geographical centre where constituent elements of multifarious queer communities can intermingle and elements of LGBTQ culture can be expressed, consumed and transmitted to others. However, in many larger cities queer communities do congregate around specific sites of consumption — LGBT bars/clubs, 'the scene' (e.g. Edinburgh's 'pink triangle'), gay prides etc. — and in some cases different queer sub-cultures congregate around different venues/sites within one city. Nevertheless, these spaces are transient, not usually of value to or marketed towards the 'whole community', dependent upon a loyal niche clientele, and often sustained by 'dedicated' community stalwarts. In a similar vein, although there is undoubtedly a palpable thirst for LGBTQ community events, as has been alluded to earlier in this chapter (see '1-Diegesis') community organisations are also, sadly, often ephemeral in nature. Most such community groups — social groups, 'regular' events, online communities and groups, websites etc. — are small and run on a (primarily) voluntary basis. They may also be impacted by evolving community concerns/interests, in-fighting, disagreements, or, crucially, a lack of those able to give their time in supporting these valuable points of community connection.

Existing outwith familial mechanisms of transmission of history and culture, LGBTQ communities are in need of continued cultivation and renewal through the incorporation of new members. A vital facet of this is (cross-generational) mechanisms of cultural transmission, expression and consumption. The consolidation of community cultures and individual enculturation is, however, hampered by the fragility of points of connection but also by the intermittent and variable nature of individual willingness (or even lack thereof) to engage with LGBTQ communities. Whether enduring or immensely popular in the short term all of these sites or points of connection are of

particular importance for this fractured, transient and, ultimately, vulnerable community.

Nevertheless, for those 'closeted' or disconnected from these points of connection (whether geographically or by choice, age, fear or trepidation), there are other crucial sources of cultural connection to our communities: namely, the internet, television and through cultural artefacts such as literature, theatre or film. If sexual identities are negotiated within heteronormative discourses and are socio-culturally and historically mediated, scholarly research cannot neglect the influence of mediums of social communication on our understandings of sexual norms, difference and deviance. As celebrated queer film scholar Richard Dyer notes 'Because, as gays, we grew up isolated not only from our heterosexual peers but also from each other, we turned to mass media for information and ideas about ourselves' (1980: 1). Cultural texts mirror, provide and are constructive of cultural discourse, and the study of the relationship between cultural texts and sexual identity is valuable in developing understanding of the processes of negotiation of sexual identity (Sullivan, 2003: 190).

Thus, cultural artefacts such as film play an accessible and vital role in LGBTQ culture and its transmission and, as discussed below, queer film festivals also provide one such crucial point of access, congregation and cultural connection.

QUEER FILM FESTIVALS

LGBT/queer-film festivals [hereafter QFF] have a convoluted lineage that extends back to the late 1970s[9] and today, across the world, there are, at the very least, more than 220 QFF.[10] The historic emergence of QFF are inherently intertwined with

[9] The first edition of the festival known today as Frameline took place in 1977 (Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 49). Similarly, although the LLGFF counts its first festival as the 1986 *Gays Own Pictures* festival, the BFI hosted a 1977 season entitled *Images of Homosexuality*. For an interesting account of the parallel historical development of two very different New York-based QFF, see Gamson (1996).

[10] In 2012, Loist and Zielinski (referencing queer programmer Mel Pritchard's website <http://www.queerfilmfestivals.org>) stated that there were 180 (61). To date, there are more than 220 significant QFF listed [February 2014]. This list, although comprehensive, only includes festivals of

contemporaneous LGBTQ socio-political agendas (Loist, 2011: 273), which were shaped by the wider (national) legal and social inequalities at that time. Furthermore, as Loist states, most QFF were actively founded with 'either a political or representational agenda' (2011: 269). Given the relative strides taken in the journey towards equality in many countries and greater levels of mainstream 'visibility' of (some) LGBTQ identities, the 'need' for specialist QFF has been disputed both outwith and within LGBTQ communities. Rhyne comments upon the call to 'disarm' and call-off QFF by those who believe such festivals have 'outlast[ed] their mandate' (2006: 620; see also Gamson, 1996: 232). Nevertheless, although many 'mainstream' festivals do include a 'queer award',[11] this study will showcase the continuing importance of QFF for LGBTQ individuals, communities, filmmakers and for the queer-film industry itself.

Noted queer-film critic B. Ruby Rich describes QFF as located 'at the intersection of *community visibility*, the market economy and cultural exchange' (2002; in Rhyne, 2006: 617, my emphasis). Unlike most 'mainstream' FF, as will be explored in this thesis, QFF hold particular value for their constituent communities given their capacity to mirror and stage images of historically marginalised populations that remain somewhat 'invisible' within mainstream cinema (and television, media and wider society).[12] QFF may also provide a rare showcase for queer filmmakers (Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 50; Loist, 2011: 268) and also operate as a 'platform' (Clarke & Jepson, 2011: 8) or visible site of queer culture to the mainstream (Lafontaine, 2006: 604). Rüling and Pederson suggest that programming is more difficult within identity-based festivals given the representational aspect of their curation (2010: 321), which Rastegar (2009) further illuminates is bound up in the multiplicity of identity (e.g. race).[13] As Markwell states, QFF offer 'marginalized groups [...] vehicles for simultaneously expressing politics, art and community' (2002: 89).

In his seminal 1996 study of two QFF, Gamson provides an overview of theories of collective identity (236-237). He notes that the continual ongoing 'filter[ing] and

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relative significance (size, professionalism, renown etc.) and so the global prevalence of QFF is likely to be significantly higher.

[11] For instance, the Berlinale's *Teddy Award*, Cannes' *Queer Palm* and the Venice Film Festival's *Queer Lion* (Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 53).

[12] See Clarke and Jepson (2011: 8).

[13] For an exploration of curation as professional practice, see Willis (2009).

reproduction' of collective identities (235) through organisations — by 'developing, displaying and promoting [particular] ways of thinking about our collective identities' (234) — and their resulting role in 'the 'mediation of collective identity' (231) are understudied (see also de Valck & Loist, 2009: 205). However, Loist and Zielinski warn that QFF may 'betray the *local inflection* of global queer politics and culture' (2012: 55, my emphasis), for instance by presenting and perpetuating a universalised picture of (somewhat familiar and easily digestible) queer identities. Similarly, while the UK-based LLGFF occurs annually at and has the backing of a national institution, some QFF organisers abroad have received death threats. For instance, in 2008 the Queer Sarajevo Festival was violently closed down and authorities plagued the Saint Petersburg's Bok o Bok LGBT Film Festival (Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 56-57). As will be argued later in this thesis, QFF offer a critical point of connection and cultural amalgamation, consolidation (and fracture), dissemination and proliferation for a geographically dispersed LGBTQ population.

Unlike their mainstream counterparts, QFF are generally characterised as having been founded by activists and having grassroots and identity-orientated origins (Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 49-50). Scholars such as de Valck and Loist (2009: 205) and Loist and Zielinski (2012: 49) suggest that this political and social-activist connection actively persists in the present day as QFF remain attentive to evolving concerns of LGBTQ communities (see also Rastegar, 2012; Jusick, 2004; Stryker, 1996; and Ommert & Loist, 2008). In engaging with these concerns, FF can operate as a 'pulpit' from which to attract media attention (Torchin, 2012: 7); build alliances to facilitate action (10); turn audiences into 'witnesses' that 'are compelled to act' (2-6); and contribute to the 'formation of racial, feminist and queer political identities' (Rastegar, 2012: 312). Interestingly, extrapolating from Hesmondhalgh (2008), Loist elaborates upon how this intertwinement with queer activism provides a continual flow of workers prepared to undertake poorly-paid or even voluntary roles (2011: 268-269). She notes that 'instead of financial rewards, cultural workers in such working conditions often find other reward strategies, for instance [...] *being able to work for something they believe in*' (270, my emphasis).

Evidently, to date, scholarly consideration of QFF has primarily cast light upon aspects of LGBTQ communities, politics and cultures. However, de Valck and Loist also suggest that such research can 'contribute to general discussions of the relationships between film festivals and their cinephile communities, [and] between reception contexts and programming' (2009: 205). Furthermore, as Loist indicates, examination of the organisation and organisational context of QFF remains 'very rare, even in organization and management studies' (2011: 268). In a similar vein, the wider institutional context and relationship between QFF and the queer-film industry has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention. The organisation, organisational context and institutional context of QFF (along with their relationships with the queer-film industry, cinephile and stakeholder communities) are thus presented as interesting opportunities for further research and are explored in this thesis.

2.4 - FESTIVALS AND (PRACTICES OF) COMMUNITIES

As this section has thus far illuminated, the CI and festivals in particular have been argued to constitute a rich example for scholarly analysis of 'temporary organisations' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319) that may 'lack in permanence' (Iordanova, 2009: 26). Cultural festivals were also proposed as organisations that play an important role for arts-producing (and -consuming) communities (d'Astous *et al.*, 2006: 15; Rüling, 2009: 49). In this regard, festivals provide an interesting and unusual context in which to consider the relationship between practice and communities. Furthermore, given their complex multi-layering of community entanglements, QFF in particular offer a nuanced terrain from which to explore this relationship. Thus, this sub-section will consider the evolution of literature that addresses the relationship between practice and community: from the 'Communities of Practice' model [hereafter CoP] (and criticisms of it) to the shift of emphasis to practice in 'Practices of a Community', before finally considering this within the context of the CI.

The construct of CoP is primarily rooted in the seminal works of Lave and Wenger (1990) and Brown and Duguid (1991).[14] Based upon five case studies,[15] Lave and Wenger proposed a constructivist practice-based theory of learning based upon a 'process-orientated worldview' (Thompson, 2011: 763) and the situated mechanism of 'legitimate peripheral participation' [hereafter LPP] within CoPs. LPP aims to describe the practices that underlie how neophytes that enjoy both *copresence*, albeit peripheral, with experts and *legitimate access* to communities can become a knowledgeable insider (Brown & Duguid, 1991: 50). LPP thus illuminates how such individuals 'learn to function in a community [...,] acquire that community's subjective viewpoint and learn to speak its language. In short, they are enculturated [...,] acquiring [...] the embodied ability to behave as community members' (Brown & Duguid, 1991: 48).

[14] Roberts (2006) provides an overview of the works of Lave and Wenger (1991), Brown and Duguid (1991, 1998) and Wenger (1998, 2000). The historical development of CoP as well as key aspects of the construct are also outlined by Nikolova and Devinney (2008), Gherardi (2009: 517-518) and Thompson (2011: 763-764). See also Adams and Freeman (2000: 39-40).
[15] The communities studied were midwives, tailors, quartermasters, butchers, and recovering alcoholics.

Following from Lave and Wenger (1990), subsequent works by Brown and Duguid (1991) and Wenger (1998, 2000) shifted the primary analytical focus of this situated learning tradition onto CoP rather than LPP. Nevertheless, Thompson advocates that 'a strong link is maintained between the notion of CoP as reified form and its underlying generative dynamic, LPP' (2011: 763). In their 2013 interview with Etienne Wenger-Trayner, Omidvar and Kislov propose CoP as:

> *the primary loci of learning, which is seen as a collective, relational, and social process. [...] People learn through co-participation in the shared practices of the "lived-in" world; knowledge production is inseparable from the situated, contextual, social engagement with these practices; and learning is a process of identity formation.*
>
> (2013: 1-2)

Notably, CoP are not static entities (Roberts, 2006: 625; Brown & Duguid, 1991: 50) but are continuously re-shaped through the performativity of practice and shifts of membership (Brown & Duguid, 1991: 50): they should never be examined in isolation (Contu, 2013: 3). CoPs are highly contextual, develop localised shared understandings (Bechky, 2003: 314) and place emphasis upon 'process, [sustained] social interaction, material practices, ambiguity [and] disagreement' (Amin & Roberts, 2008: 353-354). Another interesting dimension is our sense of belonging to a CoP, which Bell and Clarke suggest relates to three central aspects: 'engagement'; the sense that our activities are in 'alignment' with the CoP; and our 'imagination' or ability to construct an image of ourselves, our community and our world that we can 'reflexively orientate from' (2013: 3).

Nevertheless, CoP has received criticism. This relates to theoretical constructs and also to the attested misappropriation of the term by some scholars/practitioners. For instance, literature exists that construes CoP as a 'useful management tool' for knowledge generation and transfer and aims to explore the possibility of creating or cultivating a CoP in order to enhance tacit knowledge and, therefore, firm competitiveness. However, several scholars generally criticise the use of the CoP construct in this manner, including: Omidvar and Kislov (2013: 2), Thompson (2011: 764), Gherardi (2009c: 520), Amin and Roberts (2008: 353-355), Roberts (2006: 625) and Ardichvili *et al.* (2003: 64-65). Roberts provides a comprehensive overview of

critiques (both prevailing and her own) regarding the overall limitations of CoP, including the failure to adequately address the possibility for community development in an increasingly fast-paced and *short-term or project-based business environment* (2006: 626-633).[16] Similar theories, generally complementary to CoP, have emerged to address some of the limitations of the CoP construct.[17] Gherardi, however, proposes a reversal of the term: from 'Communities of Practice' to 'Practices of a Community' (2009c). This productive shift in emphasis 'from communities to situated practices' (515) highlights how 'it is the activities themselves that generate a community in that they form the "glue" which holds together a configuration of people, artefacts and social relations' (523). Evidently, the enactment of practice can both enhance and/or break down community and social relations.

Within the field of CI, scholarly consideration of communities has explored areas such as the nature of labour markets in light of the often complex (and temporary or project-based) organisational forms that characterise the CI. A 'well-documented' central focus of CI research is the particular importance of fostering social networks and building 'social capital' (Townley *et al*., 2009: 947) as a lubricating mechanism of both career development and organisational survival. Many of these studies, such as Townley *et al.* (2009), draw upon Bourdieu's concept of social capital to elucidate the significance of networks within the CI. This significance is evident in Gruglis and Stoyanova's statement that, within CI, 'social networks buttress organizational structures' (2011: 343). However, Antcliffe *et al.* warn against conceptualising 'building social capital through networked ties' as a *deliberate* strategy of individuals and further advocate that this individually-focused approach neglects the wider social and organisational settings in which networks are 'embedded' (2007: 372).

Despite the critical nature of social networks, structural aspects of some CI organisations and institutions mean that networks and (potential) connections can be

[16] Roberts also indicates other areas insufficiently addressed by CoP, including: power; trust (and competition); predispositions; size and spatial reach; the porous shifting nature of the boundaries between CoP; and the social demise of communities.
[17] For instance, the term 'networks of practice' is utilised by scholars such as Agterberg *et al.* (2010) to explore 'communities' with weaker ties or less interaction than the CoP model allows (Thompson, 2011: 765). Similarly, Lindkvist (2005) proffers the term 'collectives of practice' as more appropriate for temporary projects/groups (Roberts, 2006: 632-633) and Adler *et al.* (2008) suggest 'collaborative community'.

plagued by missing or absent links and gulfs that they cannot cross. For instance, Gruglis and Stoyanova's empirical study of the UK television industry revealed a disconnection of novices from the experts that would normally be critical to their meaningful LPP in a CoP (2011). Although they found that menial labour was undertaken in the hope of 'what it might lead to, rather than what it actually involved' (346) these hopes did not usually materialise due to the transient nature of communities (343) and the lack of opportunities for real skills development, both technical and social (349). These issues raise salient points within the context of an annually reanimated temporary organisation such as a film festival.

Evidently, the temporary and intermittent nature of festivals raises interesting questions with regards to the nature of the relationship between practice and communities. The field of practice-based studies is now well established outwith the CoP literature. Crucially, while established CoP may be represented at the research site these are not the focus of exploration in this study. Instead, focusing upon practice, as the 'Practices of a Community' model suggests, can provide complementary insight into some aspects of (community) social relations within (and across) organisations in relation to the enactment of practice. Indeed, following from emergent insights, this thesis will go on to explore how the potential of practice to 'generate' community (Gherardi, 2009c: 523) operates within one such organisation — a film festival centred around a somewhat vulnerable community — and also how such practices transcend their intermittent enactment by temporally fractured communities.

CONCLUSIONS: THE BURGEONING FIELD OF FESTIVAL STUDIES

This chapter section, 'Mise-en-scène: Festivals', has attempted to both frame this research project and illuminate festivals as an inherently complex organisational form characterised by *intermittent enactment*, cultural exchange and intricate multi-layered and multifarious networks of practice and agents. The burgeoning field of festival studies contains many avenues of enquiry that are, as yet, relatively unexplored. This is reflected in the belief that FFS would benefit from 'simply carrying out further studies' of FF (Brown, 2009: 222). Notably, some scholars have called for consideration of the 'written' or 'chronicled' festival (i.e. examination of the articulation of festival identities, positionalities etc. through artefacts) in addition to the enacted festival (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 322; Rhyne, 2009: 18). Others have called for more research examining: programming (Lee & Stringer, 2012); the impact of festivals upon audiences and filmmakers (McGill, 2011: 283); the organisation of the festival (Loist, 2011: 268; de Valck & Loist, 2009); and the relationship of FF to wider creative industries (de Valck & Loist, 2009: 215). Furthermore, as noted in 2.3, the organisation, organisational context and institutional context of QFF are presented as interesting opportunities for further research and are explored in this thesis. A further merit of the examination of QFF is that they offer a relatively unique occasion to consider temporary organisations with particularly complex and vulnerable community entanglements, and also to examine the relationship between a festival and distinct yet intertwined communities (as this project has identified and will go on to discuss, these include organisers, enactors, creatives, film-industry, audience-members and wider community-based stakeholders). This study endeavours to contribute towards these underexplored and unexplored areas, and will go on to identify and explore the relationship between practices, communities and the mechanisms that contribute to continuity within the context of intermittent organisations.

3 – FRAMING: THEORIES OF PRACTICE

This chapter section aims to provide a critical review of the multifaceted and diverse growing corpus that addresses or makes use of practice theories, and to further both articulate an outline of and consider relevant aspects of the 'turn to practice' within organisation studies. As will be argued in the following sub-sections, the engagement of organisation studies with theories of practice over the past quarter century (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 265) is illustrative of a wider 'turn to practice' within social theory (see Schatzki *et al.*, 2001; Reckwitz, 2002). Such approaches eschew traditional reliance on the subject, texts or interactions as the central loci of organisational research (Nicolini, 2011; Yakhlef, 2010a: 409). Instead, phenomena such as knowledge, human action and social meaning are understood as both 'aspects and effects of the total nexus of interconnected human practices' (Nicolini, 2011: 602, referring to Schatzki, 2001: 2) and scholars seek to explain and explore such phenomena through social and workplace practices. Thus, key elements of action — such as the body or artefacts — are considered through their embeddedness in practice. Crucially, as Nicolini suggests, practices can be considered as 'primitive and foundational [...] meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing activities (Chia & Holt, 2006; Nicolini, 2009b)' (2011: 602). Notably, however, there is no unitary definition of what constitutes a 'practice' (Nicolini, 2013: 10, 2011: 603; Handley *et al.*, 2006: 645). Coupled with the polysemy of the term itself (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 277), as will be demonstrated, this has resulted in a practice-based corpus that is diverse in both theoretical concerns and empirical approaches to the study of practice (Styhre, 2011: 109).

In order to facilitate exploration of practice theories, the remainder of this chapter section is divided into seven sub-sections, which: locate practice theories within wider social theory (3.1); consider the differentiated use of practice-based theories in organisation studies (3.2); delineate the various philosophical underpinnings of theories of practice (3.3); outline key mutually constitutive elements of practice (3.4); highlight current debates within the field of practice-based studies (3.5); consider some limitations of practice-based approaches (3.6); and, finally, the concluding sub-section offers an explanation of what is meant by 'practice' within the bounds of this study.

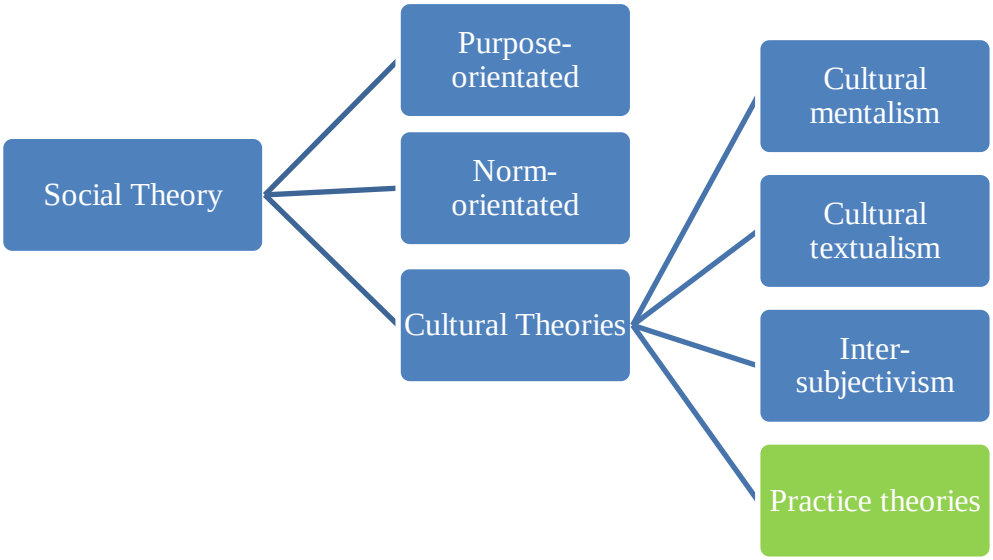
3.1 - SITUATING 'THEORIES OF PRACTICE'

In the exploration of what is meant by 'practice theories', it is pertinent to first outline how this body of literature can be distinguished from other social theories of human action. In attempts to locate practice theories within the broader domain of social theory, within practice-based studies there is recurrent recourse to Reckwitz's seminal categorization of culturalist theories of social action.[18] Following from Reckwitz's delineation of three major fields of social theory, Sandberg and Dall'Alba (2009) elaborate upon how these fields are grouped according to inherent assumptions regarding the nature of human action and social order. Firstly, *purpose-orientated theories* regard human action as governed by individuals' self-interest and subjectively defined rationale. Conversely, the second field of *norm-orientated theories* affords little agency to the individual. Instead, human action is governed by social roles, collective norms and values that collectively dictate a social 'ought' and therefore individual action. These two classical fields are challenged by a third: *cultural theories* (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1532), which highlights the importance of shared and collective symbolic structures of meaning.

Reckwitz postulates that this third field, *cultural theories*, can be further demarcated into four major branches, of which practice theories is the fourth (2002). This is illustrated overleaf in Figure 1 and an overview of Reckwitz's assertions follows below. The first branch, cultural mentalism, locates shared meaning predominately in the human mind. This approach, he argues, falls back upon a neo-Cartesian dualism of body and mind that reduces the body to a mere 'epiphenomenon'. Conversely, the second branch, cultural textualism, locates the social beyond bodily acts or mental structures. Instead, meaning is extra-subjective, located in chains of signs and symbols and is manifest in communications, discourses and texts. The third branch, intersubjectivism, locates social meaning in the symbolic interactions between agents, particularly emphasizing the importance of language.

[18] Reckwitz's 2002 article is the most cited article from the *European Journal of Social Theory* and, to date, has been cited almost 1500 times.

Figure 1: Locating practice theories within a wider taxonomy of social theory
(based upon Sandberg & Dall'Alba [2009] and Reckwitz [2002])



Unlike the other three branches of cultural theories, practice theories do not locate social meaning in the mind, extra-mental/corporeal systems of signs or symbolic interactions. In this fourth branch, human action and social meaning emerge through social practices (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009).[19] As Nicolini explains, in the case of organisation studies, practice theories 'argu[e] that the meaningful, purposive and consistent nature of human conduct derives from participating in [...] a nexus of practices and not from the deployment of rules, goals, and mental contents, as in the traditional rationalist and functionalist view' (2011: 602). A deeper and more nuanced explanation of what is meant by practice within this study will follow but a practice can be generally articulated, at a basic level, as embodied patterns of skilful activities based around shared understandings. For instance, the coffee-making practice of a barista is constituted by the recursivity of a number of skilful actions based upon shared understandings, such as steaming milk in the appropriate manner and to the correct consistency for making a cappuccino.

[19] See Reckwitz's categorisation of social theories (2002) for a more detailed account. Also, see Sandberg and Dall'Alba (2009) for a summary of Reckwitz's model and relevant corresponding examples from organisation studies.

3.2 - PRACTICE-BASED APPROACHES IN ORGANISATION STUDIES

Following from the location of practice theories within the wider field of social theory, this sub-section will articulate the emergence and differentiated uses of practice theories within organisation studies.

THE TURN TO PRACTICE

The recent and continued growth of interest in practice theories has prompted declaration of a 'practice turn' in organisation studies (Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011: 165; Whittington, 2011: 183; Miettinen *et al*., 2009; term first coined by Schatzki *et al*., 2001). This turn has yielded a rich and diverse corpus of practice-based theoretical and empirical material for scholarly consideration (Styhre, 2011: 109; Nicolini, 2007: 892). Nevertheless, it is pertinent to first explore what practice theories are indeed 'turning from'.

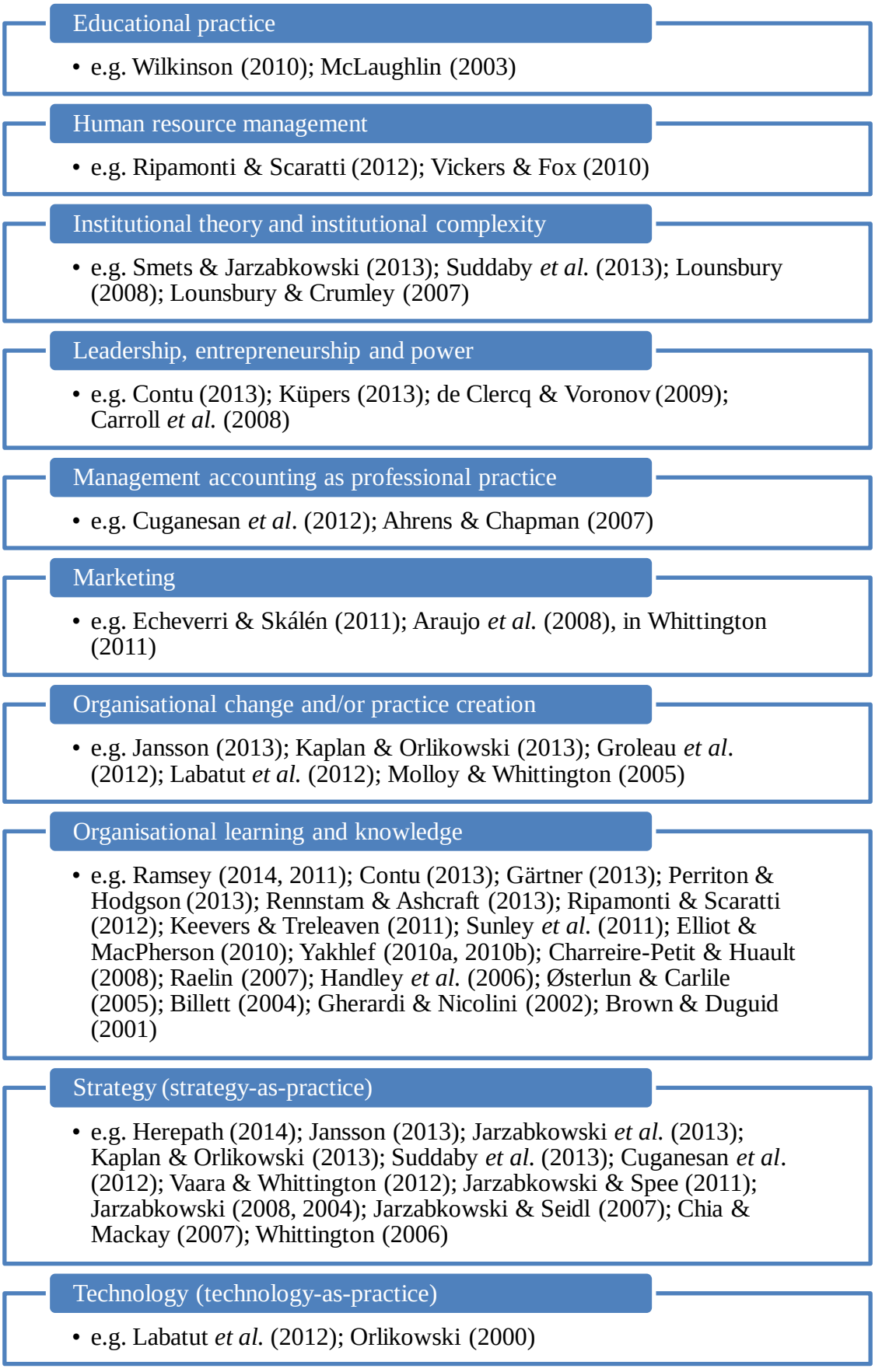
Traditional approaches to the study of organisation draw criticism for continued reliance upon and recourse to scientific rationality (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 339; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1212). It is argued that these approaches remain entrenched in a *static* ontological understanding of organisation, organisational processes and the social (Styhre, 2011: 113). Furthermore, this effects a persistence in focus upon formal aspects of organisation (Geiger, 2009: 129) and a reliance upon traditional dualisms such as structure/process (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Miettinen *et al*., 2009: 1313). It can be argued that the resulting abstraction of organisational phenomena disengages organisation studies from the 'actualities that make up organisational life' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 338; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1209-1212). This, arguably, renders the organisational 'lifeworld' and the particular object of study (and the wider historical-cultural setting) as static, 'fixed', and somewhat artificial in nature (Styhre, 2011: 113; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 339).

This prevailing division between academic theorising and the 'real-life' experiences and sense-making of practitioners has been identified as a key rationale for the 'turn to practice' within organisation studies (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 338-339; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1209-1210; Nicolini, 2009: 1391; Geiger, 2009: 129). In the past quarter century the practice idiom has been embraced as a conceptual framework for centring scholarly enquiry in 'real-life' and moving beyond the formal, quantifiable and abstract. It is argued that practice theories allow better access to the deeply embedded bodily-mental patterns of activity (Whittington, 2011: 184; Geiger, 2009: 129), such as the earlier example of the bodily-mental schema for making cappuccino milk. Furthermore, the performative nature of practice facilitates a re-conceptualisation of the organisational world as one of uncertainty, flux and fluidity where the 'dimension of the provisional and of the historically situated are combined in the everyday doing of actors' (Corradi *et al.*, 2008: 20). The study of organisation becomes the study of organiz*ing* (Styhre, 2011; Bjørkeng *et al.*, 2009: 147; Carlsen, 2006).

Scholars, however, have warned that the lack of a clear definition of what is meant by practice may result in the eventual 'incoherence and dilution' of practice-based studies (Whittington, 2011: 184). Additionally, Corradi *et al.* warn that the 'rush to practice' may hinder the theoretical development of the field (2010: 277). Nevertheless, the malleability of the term, given the vagueness of its meaning, has afforded impetus to 'practice-based studies' (Nicolini: 2013; Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 277). Furthermore, Gherardi proffers the 'rapid diffusion of the practice concept as evidence of the power intrinsic to the central concept of practice' (2009a: 115). This rapid diffusion is evident in the wide range of concerns and debates within practice-based studies in recent years: Figure 2 illustrates this diversity overleaf.[20] Despite many common underlying assumptions, as will be further explored, the manifold nature of theories of practice affords each practice theorist the opportunity to emphasize different relationships, aspects of practice and logics of practice (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

[20] This table does not present an exhaustive list of the variety of fields or areas of study that have utilised practice theories (i.e. ethics, sustainability, consumption, organisational space, criticism etc.), nor does it offer a comprehensive overview of the abundance of articles relating to each 'category'. Additionally, as articles are placed according to their scope, some articles appear within more than one category. For instance, Jansson's (2013) article explores practices of organizational change but is, as she states, informed by a strategy-as-practice perspective.

Figure 2: The varied and widespread consideration and utilisation of practice theories



For a fuller articulation of the 'practice turn' in different areas of organisational research than is provided here, see Whittington (2011), Corradi *et al*. (2010) and Sandberg and Dall'Alba (2009). Nevertheless, the differential utilisation of practice theories within organisation studies can be broadly categorised into two main streams of thought: practice as an 'empirical object' and practice as a 'way of seeing' (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 267; Geiger, 2009: 130). The following two parts of this sub-section will outline these approaches to practice.

PRACTICE AS AN 'EMPIRICAL OBJECT'

The 'practice as empirical object' approach outlined by Corradi *et al*. (2010) comprises three distinct points of reference. Firstly, the *practice-based standpoint* of Brown and Duguid (1991) seeks to explore how practice — or 'real-work' — is shaped by group and organisational context. Secondly, the *work-based learning*/*practice-based learning* approach considers context-dependent learning. Finally, the approach of *practice as what people do* seeks to determine 'what people routinely do in their particular fields of practice' (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 271). This final approach has been popular in recent years within organisation studies; especially within the strategy-as-practice tradition, which is, in turn, informed by studies of science-as-practice (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 271). What unites these individual approaches is their understanding of practice as an empirical object that holds the key to understanding or discovering the 'real' essence of work. Practice is conceptualised as 'what people do' and empirical attempts are made to capture the everyday situated routine of practitioners. In order to further illustrate the 'practice as empirical object' approach within organisation studies, strategy-as-practice (SAP) will be further discussed below.

The adoption of practice-based approaches within the field of strategy represents an attempt to explore strategy as something organisations 'do', not something that they possess. This is manifest in a shift from the traditional examination of strategy as a

static entity to the endeavour to explore strategy formation and emergence (Jarzabkowski *et al*., 2013: 41).[21] As Thomson explains, SAP researchers:

> *stress the way that entitative conceptions of strategy can be enhanced through a lens that highlights its enacted and, thus, necessarily conjoined dimensions. The epistemological shift is subtle, however; such a view continues to acknowledge the importance of artefacts such as formal processes and documents in crystallizing strategic direction and, thus, does not attempt inappropriately to supplant an entitative with a process worldview.*
>
> (2011: 759)

Notably, Whittington (2006) developed a SAP model comprising three central foci of empirical research: practitioners, praxis and practices. However, SAP's adoption of practice theory has attracted criticism from some practice theorists. Geiger argues that scholars such as Jarzabkowski and Whittington have ultimately fallen foul of the polysemy of practice and have merely adopted the commonsense understanding of practice in focusing on *what actors do* (2009: 130). Sandberg and Dall'Alba also offer a somewhat disparaging account of the SAP perspective (2009: 1360-1362). In particular they criticise Whittington's 2006 model for conceptualising practice as composed of discrete entities and thus negating the mutually constitutive and interrelated nature of elements of practice. Nevertheless, Corradi *et al.* offer a more favourable opinion. They describe SAP as a 'complex and composite systems of habitus[22], artefacts, and socially-defined forms of action that constitute the flow of strategic activities' (2008: 12). Crucially, recent criticism from within the ranks of SAP has attempted to both address the ways in which SAP may not yet be realising the full potential of practice-based studies and also to take both theoretical and empirical steps to overcome these shortcomings.[23]

[21] For examples, see: Jarzabkowski *et al*. (2013); Vaara and Whittington (2012); Jarzabkowski and Spee (2011); Jarzabkowski (2008, 2004); Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2007); Chia and Mackay (2007); and Whittington (2006).
[22] The philosophical underpinnings of practice theories are discussed in sub-section 1.3 of this chapter.
[23] For instance, Vaara and Whittington (2012) offer five suggestions to bolster the development of the SAP approach. A contemporary overview of some of the 'current trends and shortcomings' of the SAP perspective is provided by Jarzabkowski *et al.* (2013).

PRACTICE AS A 'WAY OF SEEING'

Unlike the former approach, scholars utilising the 'practice as a way of seeing' approach do not seek to uncover the 'real' essence of work or the difference between espoused practice and actual practice. Instead, they utilise practice as a 'way of seeing'. Practice is not an object of study but, rather, becomes a metaphorical lens through which to examine organisational phenomena. This approach has a number of tributaries (and outlets) that it is useful to consider. Following from Geiger's (2009) categorization of 'epistemic-normative' uses of practice theories, the 'practice as a way of seeing' approach outlined by Corradi *et al*. (2010) comprises four (non-exclusive) points of reference, summarised below.

Firstly, the 'Practice-lens and Practice-orientated research' approach situates practice as the locus for the (re-)production of social relations and actions. These collectively enact structures which then shape the emergent and situated activities of the said practice, highlighting how the micro-level creates and recreates macro-level phenomena (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 273-274). The second approach, 'knowing-in-practice', challenges the traditional presumption that knowledge is static and located within individual minds and/or embedded in the organisation (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 274). Instead, knowing-in-practice is an 'ongoing social accomplishment' (Orlikowski, 2002: 249) and practice is the 'figure of discourse that allows the processes of knowing at work and in organizing to be articulated as historical processes, material and indeterminate' (Gherardi, 2000: 220-221). The 'Practice-based perspective', the third approach, grounds practice in the context in which it is performed, highlighting the site-specific nature of work practice. Grounding the study of practice in its specific historical and cultural setting also illuminates the historically-situated and provisional nature of practice (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 276; 2008: 20). The final contributor, termed 'Practice-based approaches', has sought to explore the development of competence in practice through trial-and-error (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 276). Overall, the 'practice as a way of seeing' approach holds great appeal for researchers seeking to explore a variety of organisational phenomena. As Nicolini elaborates:

> *The social world appears as a vast array or assemblage of performances made durable by being inscribed in human bodies and minds, objects and texts, and knotted together in such a way that the results of one performance become the resource for another. As such, practice theories potentially offer a new vista on all things organizational (and social).*
>
> (2013: 2)

SUMMARY: PRACTICE-BASED APPROACHES IN ORGANISATION STUDIES

The two broad approaches explore above — 'practice as empirical object' and 'practice as a way of seeing' — have been suggested as complementary (i.e. Miettinen *et al.*, 2009: 1312). Indeed, each approach necessarily implies the other. However, many scholars of the latter approach warn against a loss of the critical power of 'practice' in the former's commonsense conceptualisation of practice. They argue that practice becomes reductively synonymous with 'what people do' (e.g. Whittington, 2011: 184; Geiger, 2009: 130; Gherardi, 2009a and 2009b: 536; Handley *et al.*, 2006: 645). Furthermore, scholars stress that the tendency towards understanding practice in this way (see Corradi *et al.* [2010] and Geiger [2009]) risks practice-based approaches becoming little more than a 'micro-focused version of process theory' (Whittington, 2011: 184). Additionally, they warn of focusing on individual activity at the expense of exploring how 'organisation is produced by a nexus of [...] practices' (Reckwitz, 2002: 258). Nevertheless, as Figure 2 has shown, the 'practice as empirical object' approach remains popular within organisation studies. Similarly, the 'practice as a way of seeing' approach has also attracted criticism. For instance, Gherardi suggests that the metaphor of the lens 'evokes a mental image of the researcher as a Sherlock Holmes intent upon the close scrutiny of a reality' (2009: 123). Positioning the researcher on the other side of a lens to the phenomenon under study dislocates the researcher from the researched, and ignores their role in the (re-)construction of practice.

Overall, we can conclude that neither approach is without fault. They are, in fact, differentially employed within the study of organisations depending upon the aims

of the researcher. The approach adopted in this study is 'practice as a way of seeing', which, arguably, has both garnered broader support within organisation studies and attracted less criticism than the 'practice as empirical object' approach. However, the associated problem of the dislocation of the researcher remains. To this end, Eikeland and Nicolini (2011) advocate a model of turning to practice that may begin to challenge this. They propose that while the aims of a research project may remain broadly theoretical, it is important, where possible, to alter the position of the researcher from that of a spectator to one of immersion 'within and below'. They stress the importance of critical dialogue and the opportunity to generate *theoria*: theoretical insight based on self-reflective articulation from within practical experience. This will be further discussed in the following chapter, 'III: Methodology'.

3.3 - PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF PRACTICE THEORIES

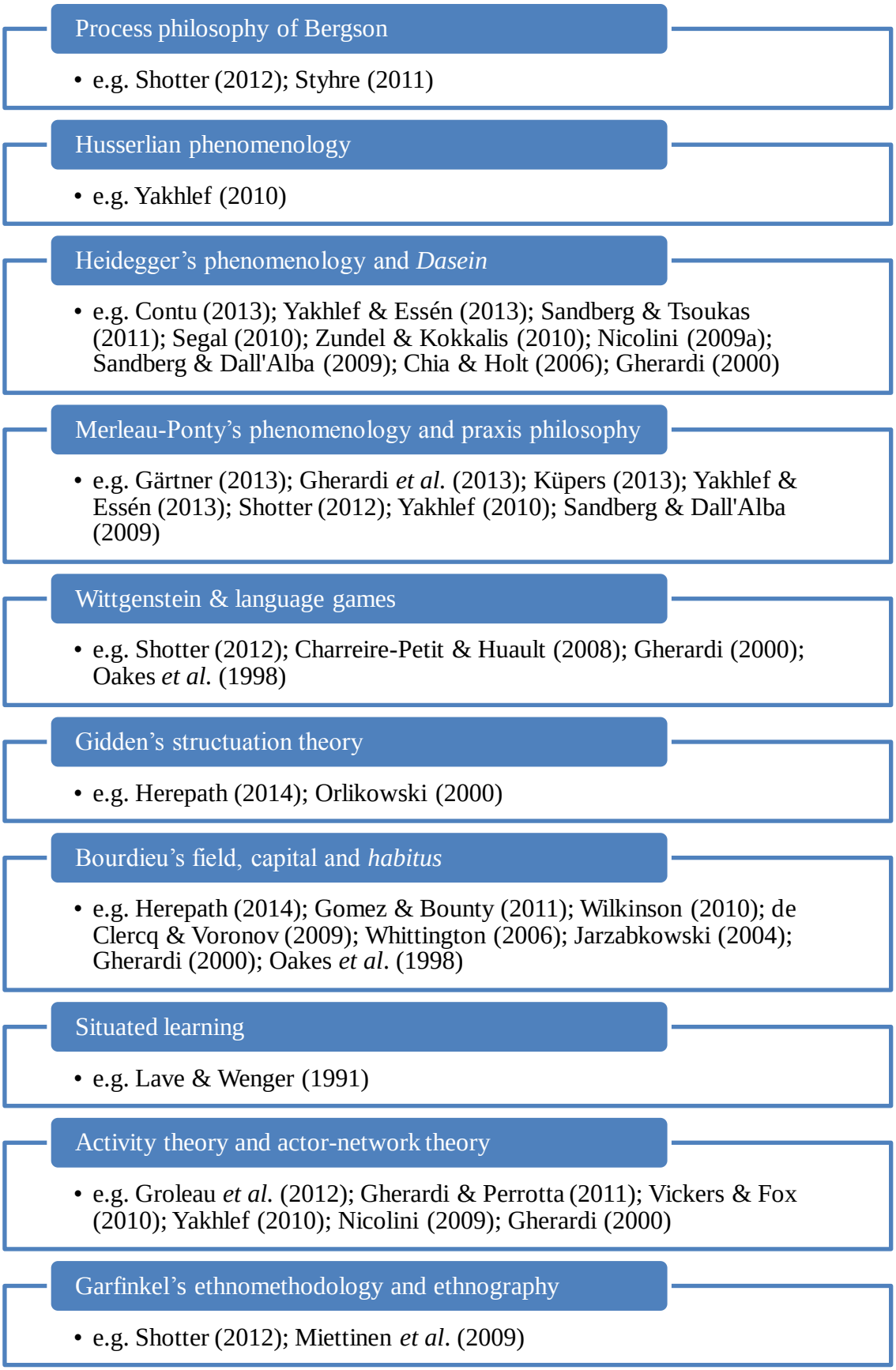
Following from the location of practice theory within (3.1) wider social theory and (3.2) organisation studies, this sub-section will outline the theoretical and philosophical traditions that inform practice-based research. Subsequent to this, various elements of practice will be explored (3.4), current debates articulated (3.5) and the limitations of practice theories discussed (3.6) before arriving at a contributory definition of practice in the concluding sub-section.

As delineated in the preceding sub-section, practice theories have been differentially employed in organisation studies for various theoretical and empirical ends. As will be argued, this flexibility stems from the complex and multifaceted theoretical and philosophical heritage of practice theories.[24] Practice, at its most basic level, can be commonly envisaged as 'embodied arrays of activities based around shared practical understanding' (Bjørkeng *et al.*, 2009: 146). Beyond this, however, each practice-based study makes individual use of a diverse assortment of theoretical and philosophical material in elucidating their precise idiosyncratic conceptualisation of practice (Yakhlef, 2010: 412; Gherardi, 2000: 214). Although not an exhaustive list by any means, Figure 3 overleaf provides a flavour of this multiplicity through examples of philosophical orientations/materials utilised in this field.[25] Notably, many scholars employ multiple philosophical resources — and, as such, make more than one appearance in the table — in order to more fully explore this 'multi-dimensional phenomenon' (Nicolini, 2009: 1395). Feldman and Orlikowski illustrate the irregularity of practice theories in describing them as a 'relatively unsettled theoretical landscape' (2011: 1245). Nevertheless, the majority of philosophical inputs to practice-based studies are 'inspired by what can be called a *life-world perspective*, as the practice turn

[24] Nicolini (2013) offers a more detailed consideration of the philosophical and theoretical contributors to practice theories than can be offered here, and gives particular attention to Bourdieu, Giddens, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Schatzki, Marx, classical origins (Plato and Aristotle), Activity Theory and Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology. Notably, Yakhlef and Essén (2013) provide a comprehensive overview of phenomenological approaches to practice and, in particular, examine the contributions of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein and Shotter.

[25] The aim here is not to present an in-depth account but rather to offer an example of the variety of philosophical/theoretical material that has informed recent publications addressing/employing theories of practice.

Figure 3: Philosophical/theoretical material utilised in recent practice publications



is tied to an interest in the everyday' (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1350).

This life-world perspective, which is very briefly outlined below, was developed within the philosophical tradition of phenomenology.[26] Broadly, phenomenology scholars advocate that we cannot grasp reality: it is only 'available' through our *perceptions* of reality. The construct of life-world originates from Husserl's concept of *lebenswelt*, first introduced in his 1936 work *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Some scholars, however, propose that the development of this concept can be traced further back through Husserl's much earlier works to his notion of *erfahrungswelt* (or, 'world of experience') presented in Husserl's 1913 publication *Ideas I* (Moran, 1999: 181). Husserl's fundamental epistemological construct of the 'life-world' involved the study of conscious experience (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1353) but crucially retained a Cartesian subject. Amongst Husserl's wider contributions, this construct has been critiqued and further developed by scholars such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Schütz.

Within practice-based studies, however, Heideggerian phenomenology — given its rejection of 'Husserl's neo-Cartesian emphasis on consciousness and subjectivity' (Smith, 2013: Section 4) — has been more influential, as Figure 3 has illustrated. Heidegger's conceptualisation of *Dasein* (or, being-in-the-world) was introduced in *Being and Time* (1927), and thus pre-dates *lebenswelt* (although Husserl explicitly denied that *Being and Time* influenced his own work [Moran, 1999: 182]). Notably, however, Heidegger's differential exploration of the life-world reflects his belief that consciousness is not a determinant of existence but, rather, the mind is an effect of existence. By 'being-in-the-world' Heidegger attempts to better capture the *entwined* primacy of one's existence over consciousness. There is no abstract Cartesian agent whom can 'disengage' and reflexively consider the world (Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1212-1213). Furthermore, the subject and object are indistinguishable (Gherardi, 2000: 214). The most basic form of being-in-the-world is entwinement; it is practical engagements with the world that are constitutive of our environment and us (Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1212-1213). The consciousness is always entwined in the world: never

[26] For a fuller account than can be offered here, see Moran (1999), Dreyfus (1991), Mohanty (2011) and Smith (2013).

separated and always interwoven with others and things in specific socio-material practice worlds (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 343-345; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009). Sandberg and Tsoukas even go so far as to state that 'entwinement constitutes the logic of practice' (2011: 343) and stress that entwinement is sensitive to the embodied and temporal nature of practice.

The particular contribution of Merleau-Ponty to this phenomenological tradition stems from his criticism of classical phenomenology as disengaging subjects from the embodied nature of their entwinement (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 882; Yakhlef, 2010). Practice theorists with a particular concern for the role of the body in practice have commended his praxis philosophy, whereby action and engagement are fore-grounded (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013; Yakhlef, 2010: 410-422; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1354). Furthermore, as perception mediates our being-in-the-world, the lived body is articulated as the means of access to and site of our entwinement in the world (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013; Gärtner, 2013: 342; Gherardi, 2013: 334; Yakhlef, 2010: 410-422; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1354). Outwith the phenomenological tradition, the work of Bourdieu has also been popular with practice theorists. Bourdieu advocates the exploration of the experiences of actors through their position within social worlds that he terms *fields.* Each field comprises the totality of relevant actors (Oakes *et al.*, 1998: 259) and is structured over time by the collective enactment of individual *habitus* through practice (Gomez & Bounty, 2011: 922). *Habitus* can be broadly understood here as a set of individual subjective dispositions, skills, tastes, and schemata acquired over time through everyday experiences.[27]

Overall, we can conclude that the prevalent interest of practice theorists in this life-world perspective reflects the commitment of practice theories to the embodied and temporal nature of practice. Entwinement also suggests both the immersion of individual practitioners within (specific and multiple) practices and our resulting inability to reflexively articulate our socio-material practice worlds. Furthermore, this approach highlights the differentiated individual experience of practice and sense-making of practitioners.

[27] Merleau-Ponty also employs the term *habitus*, in a manner broadly similar to that of Bourdieu (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 885).

3.4 - ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE

Unlike other social theories and traditional approaches to the study of organisation, within practice-based approaches meaning is relocated to 'practice' (Nicolini, 2009: 1391), as is the focus of scholarly exploration. Thus, in order to arrive at a definitional framework of what is meant by 'practice' within this study, it is pertinent to first sketch a fuller outline through consideration of important aspects and assumptions of practice theories. To facilitate this, seven key constitutive elements of practice are discussed and the remainder of this sub-section is accordingly sub-divided into seven corresponding parts.[28] It should be noted that these elements are interrelated and mutually-constitutive; their separation here is for illustrative purposes only.

3.4.1 - THE AGENT AND THE INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT

Unlike many traditional approaches to the study of organisation, in practice studies the individual subject is not the primary locus of scholarly research. Instead, practice-based theorists attempt to de-centre the ubiquitous 'subject' as the central foci of organisational studies; there is an 'overall shift in emphasis toward the practice (rather than practitioners)' (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2013: 6). To this end, the individual is reconceptualised as an agent (comprised of both body and mind) who carries out practice. These 'carriers of practice' perform the skilled activities that constitute practice and receive sensible impressions from their bodily interactions with their specific socio-material practice worlds (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013). Through this embodied enactment of practice by individual agents, the performative nature of practice becomes manifest. There is no singular ideal 'practice' or 'practice activity': agents instead repeatedly enact an approximation of the patterns of skilled activities that comprise each specific practice. For instance, with reference to the earlier example, there is no singular way to 'be' a barista or to delineate coffee-making practice.

[28] These seven elements are broadly informed by and adapted from the categories that Reckwitz utilises to illustrate differences between categories of social theory that he identifies in his 2002 article.

Individual participation in a practice is additionally differentiated according to individual experience, access to tacit know-how[29] and individual engagement with practice (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 885).

Notably, agency is re-situated and agents are understood to be immersed in a flow of '*agential* intra-actions, such that we find things happening to us as much as we can make things happen within it [...,] our surroundings are agential' (Shotter, 2013: 246, emphasis in original). In the exploration of practice, agents are not awarded greater significance by the researcher than the other elements of practice:

> *It is people who create, invent, and enact organization through their corporeality, which enables them to acquire sensible knowledge as well as to engage in intellectual ratiocination – and always in relation to the non-human elements that make up the organizational space.*
>
> (Gherardi *et al*. 2013: 334; paraphrasing Strati, 2007: 66)

Furthermore, each individual agent is a unique crossing point of the embodied enactment of a number of diverse practices: no agent is involved in only one practice (Reckwitz, 2000: 257). The following two parts of this sub-section outline the conceptualisation of two elements that engage particularly with the construct of the agent: the body (3.4.2) and the mind (3.4.3).

3.4.2 - THE BODY

Yakhlef argues that bodily practices have to date been neglected by practice-based studies (2010a: 409). The body is a key element of practice: it is through the body that practice becomes manifest in the routinized skilful performance of bodily activities. Moreover, it is also through the body that individual agents interact with practices and receive sensible impressions (2010a: 410-411). However, for practice theories the body is neither a mere physical/biological entity, nor a mere instrument 'used' by an agent. Relating to the previously outlined dominance of the life-world perspective, the *lived-*

[29] This will be further discussed in 1.4.4.

body is inescapably entwined with the social and material world. The body is the medium for our experience of and our access to social practices (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 884; Yakhlef, 2010a: 410-411).

Sensible knowledge[30] is perceived, aesthetically judged, produced and reproduced through the bodily senses (Geiger, 2009; Gherardi, 2009b: 539 and 2008: 520; Strati, 2007: 62). The body is not bound by its materiality: it extends into and incorporates things in our world, for instance tools (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1355-1359). Revisiting the earlier example of the barista, during the skilful preparation of an espresso shot, freshly-ground coffee must be compressed using a tamper; this device is an extension of the barista's arm and ability to exert force, inseparable as they push down on the coffee-grounds via this metal tool. Furthermore, Gherardi stresses that the role of aesthetic judgement and taste has been gravely neglected within practice-based studies. She argues that the activities comprising practice are sustained through judgements relating to utility, ethics and *aesthetics* (2009b: 537). Sensible impressions are perceived and aesthetically judged (Gherardi, 2009b: 539 and 2008: 520; Strati, 2007: 62) according to learned socially-situated and negotiated parameters of taste.

Knowing and learning are also inescapably linked to the body as knowing-in-practice is situated in the body (Gherardi *et al*., 2013: 333-334; Gherardi, 2008: 520). Strati advocates that all knowing is shaped by sensible perception and is, therefore, locally contingent to the individual (2007). Knowing-in-practice is situated within the body (Gherardi, 2008: 520) and is thus individually differentiated. Some of the skilful activities that constitute practice depend upon the development of bodily skills that facilitate what Merleau-Ponty, in 1962, termed 'skilful coping' (Yakhlef, 2010a: 410-411; Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 884-885). 'Skilful coping' denotes a level of experience within a practice whereby practitioners have developed corporeal schema that operate as a heuristic device and allow the activities of a practice to fade into a pre-reflexive background. Returning once again to the example of coffee-making practice and the tamping of an espresso, a neophyte barista can be instructed (and shown how) to exert 25lbs of pressure using the tamper on the group-handle. However, this is meaningless until it is tied to bodily practical experience and is 'assimilated in an "embodied,

[30] Impressions from the senses, for instance through the sense of touch.

atheoretical way"' (citing Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005: 786; in Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 884). We cannot 'know' what it feels like to exert 25lbs of pressure without tamping experience and developing, over time, a bodily schema that allows us to exert what we learn to be the 'correct' pressure. An experienced barista can explain the technical aspects of tamping, but not the experiential nature of this embodied activity. The tacit nature of these bodily schema render them inaccessible: famously, 'we know more than we can tell' (Polanyi, 1967). Nevertheless, Gärtner warns that many practice-based studies have continued to objectify the body, rather than considering the 'lived body', by focusing their analysis upon only '*observable* sensorimotor behaviours' (my emphasis, 2013: 342).

3.4.3 - THE MIND AND COGNITION

Johnson (2007: 1-2) critiques the pervasive illusion of the disembodied rational mind that must seek to control the 'lower' emotive and desiring body. For practice theorists, there is no abstract Cartesian agent whom can 'disengage' and reflexively consider social practice (Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1212-1213). Furthermore, unlike most approaches to the examination of organisational phenomena, practice theorists seek to de-centre cognition of the sovereign subject as the ultimate source of meaning and knowledge. Instead, ontological primacy is afforded to practice (Nicolini, 2011: 603) and meaning is not presumed to be located in subject-object relations. Instead meaning is sought in the entwinement of ourselves, others and things in a relational whole (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 345). Cognition is not conceptualised as the preserve of a rational and disembodied mind: judgements are embodied (Keevers & Treleaven, 2011: 507). In fact, practice theorists actively seek to engage with pre-reflexive and embodied corporeal schemas (Yakhlef, 2010a: 412) and with the implicit and tacit know-how accessed through meaningful participation in the practice (Handley *et al.*, 2006). As Yakhlef and Essén suggest, 'perceiving, thinking and acting do not

involve distinct moments, but form a whole, a gestalt that appears to an agent as the thing that it makes sense to do' (2013: 884).[31]

A notable example is Keevers' and Treleaven's 2011 exploration of reflection-in-action. They advocate that practice-based studies must go beyond the organisational studies metaphor of *reflection* (which suggests looking in a mirror with objective detachment). They instead suggest a critical reflexivity metaphor of *diffraction* (506-507) whereby focus is re-centred upon the *effects* of practice, and 'entanglement, co-production and [the] relational qualities of practice' are fore-grounded (518). Nevertheless, they do issue a cautionary note that researchers should not focus on the individual at the expense of obscuring the relevance of wider organisational cultures and 'socio-political contexts' upon cognition (518).

Further to consideration of the agent (3.4.1), the body (3.4.2) and the mind (3.4.3), this sub-section will now explore other aspects of practice, including: the nature of knowledge and learning (3.4.4); language and discourse (3.4.5); artefacts and objects (3.4.6); and structure and process (3.4.7).

3.4.4 - KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

Following from communities of practice and situated learning theory literatures, practice-based studies have retained a significant interest in the relationship of knowledge and learning both to and within socio-material practices. Unlike traditional reliance upon abstract mentalist assumptions (Chia & MacKay, 2007: 230), practice theorists seek a non rational-cognitive conception of knowledge (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 267). Knowledge is not static or located within individual minds and/or organisations (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2013: 5; Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 274). Instead, knowledge is understood as 'doings' that become manifest and transpire through practice (Nicolini, 2011: 603; Orlikowski, 2002: 249; Gherardi, 2000: 220-221). However, Gärtner warns that conflating learning and knowing with *doings*, or 'equating knowing with acting', is

[31] Some practice-based studies that explore mindfulness, sense-making and reflexivity are listed in Figure 4 (page 69).

problematic as it reduces them to mere activities (2013: 342). Rennstam and Ashcraft indicate a shift in scholarly emphasis 'toward the practice (rather than practitioners) of knowing' (2013: 6). Furthermore, they argue that, contrary to Blackler's typology of knowledge types[32], practice-based approaches can conceptualise knowledge as both embodied and encultured. Moving beyond codified factual knowledge, the locus of much scholarly interest is the pre-reflexive nature of tacit knowledge and corporeal schemas developed within practice (Nicolini, 2011: 613). As outlined in 3.4.2, through experience these bodily schemas become habitual and facilitate 'skilful coping' (Yakhlef, 2010a: 410-411). However, those new to a practice or the inexperienced do not simply develop these schemas; they develop through *meaningful engagement* with practice, and learning depends upon this engagement (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 885).

Knowing-in-practice is situated (Styhre, 2011: 120; Yakhlef, 2010; Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 267; Gherardi, 2008: 520): in the body, in interactions, in language and in space (Gherardi, 2008: 520). It is also locally contingent to the individual as it is shaped by sensible perception (Strati, 2007) and aesthetic judgement (Gherardi, 2009b). Furthermore, it is idiosyncratically constituted and reproduced as actors differentially engage with practice. Knowing can be ultimately understood as 'a situated, collaborative accomplishment, inherent and anchored in an infinite variety of social practices, practice theory insists on the existence of multiple, undetermined sites and agents of knowing activity' (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2013: 4).

3.4.5 - LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE

Unlike other cultural theories, the consideration of language within a practice-based approach does not privilege communicative action over other forms of action. Nevertheless, the relationship between practice and language is important and scholars such as Nicolini (2011: 614) and Yakhlef and Essén (2013: 886-887) have considered

[32] Blackler's (1995) typology of knowledge: (i) 'embrained' (abstract/theoretical, acquired through cognitive activity); (ii) embodied (tacit, acquired by doing); (iii) encultured (language-based and resides in shared understandings, acquired through socialisation); (iv) embedded (resides in systems/routines); (v) encoded (information stored in manuals/databases). See Rennstam and Ashcraft (2013).

language within their studies. Language is based upon shared understandings and meanings and exists through routinized use: it is not directly reflective of reality. However, language and discourse are fruitfully illustrative of both the situated and historically contingent nature of practice. Practice is situated in a specific temporal and physical location. Thus, site-based peculiarities of language use become manifest over time, although this is historically contingent. Furthermore, the particular discourse surrounding practice is also situated, and is influenced by both exogenous factors (such as terminology and branding) and endogenous factors (such as group norms and site-specific historic peculiarities). Additionally, knowing is situated in language (Gherardi, 2008: 520) and language can act as a barrier to those who are uninitiated into a practice. Perhaps most significantly, language plays a key role — as with the other elements of practice here discussed — in the continued performance of practice: 'language and practice co-constitute each other with language playing a significant part in the production and ongoing reproduction of practice' (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 887, reflecting Taylor's [1985] view).

3.4.6 - ARTEFACTS AND OBJECTS

Practice theorists do not afford any greater significance to subject-subject interactions over subject-object interactions. In fact, artefacts are key elements of practice that we are never separate from and always intertwined with (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 343-345; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009). Artefacts mould practice by enabling and limiting particular activities and thereby operating as boundary objects (Nicolini, 2011), for instance in the written 'standard operating procedures' delineated by an organisation. As a consequence, these artefacts mediate and stabilise the meaning of activity within practice (Elliot & MacPherson, 2010: 573; MacPherson & Clark, 2009: 553). Artefacts such as tools, brand standards, technologies, rules, stories, systems, group norms, training manuals, procedures, texts, targets and objectives are also symbolic of current practice. These then allow actors to assess the legitimacy and worth of their own performance and that of others (Elliot & MacPherson, 2010: 573). There is no division between the body and a tool (Styhre, 2011: 119); the tool is a mere

extension of the body, for instance a doctor's stethoscope, and is implicated in sensible impressions. For the tool to 'be', it must have meaning and purpose within the practice (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 343-345; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1355-1359). Similarly, Jarzabkowski *et al.* suggest that objects do not have stable properties but, rather, that they 'gain situated meanings [...] within an activity and, at the same time, shape that activity', thus the nature of objects are 'continuously unfolding according to their situated use' (2013: 43). They further consider the complex and ubiquitous multiplicity of practices and note that multiple objects may be 'layered and entwined' within any one practice (43).

3.4.7 - STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Structure is located in the routine nature of action within practice, as governed by collectively-negotiated and -shared rules and norms. An example of this would be group norms governing social interactions within a practice, for instance those which establish more experienced practitioners as more senior than those less experienced but of the same 'grade'. The site-specific nature of work practices, as historically-situated and provisional (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 276), is evident in the differential enactment of practice manifest even in different 'sites' within one organisation. Furthermore, the idiosyncratic disparities that result from the performative nature of practice (manifest in the differentiated performances of a practitioner even within one 'site') result in a constant re-presentation of practice and 'the results of one performance become the resource for another' (Nicolini, 2013: 2). This calls to mind the possibility of change over time (or even a breakdown) in the extant structures of practice (i.e. of activities, group norms etc.), illuminating the temporality of practices. Pragmatic innovation on the part of a practitioner may result in a novel action that then is adopted by the wider practice-group and could eventually constitute a structural element of the practice itself. Indeed, a number of scholars have explored the mechanisms of practice change,

destabilisation and creation.[33] Nevertheless, practices express larger and more enduring structures than can be observed at any given moment (Whittington, 2011: 184-185). They are also shaped through exogenous pressures from the wider social field and institutions (Lounsbury, 2008). Scholars such as Gherardi and Perrotta (2011) have stressed the importance of the scholarly consideration of the wider institutional context of workplace practices. Moreover, crucially, the continuous enactment of practice is a common assumption and the re-emergence of practice following a period of latency (i.e. in an intermittent organisation) remains relatively unexplored. As will be further indicated, transcending discontinuous enactment emerged as a significant aspect of this project and this study has further endeavoured to both consider and illuminate the relational nature of practices and the context in which they are enacted.

SUMMARY: ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE

It is evident that practice is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. The key elements considered in this sub-section are interrelated, mutually-constitutive aspects that cannot be easily distinguished for the purposes of examination. Meaning is located in practice (Nicolini, 2009: 1391) and, as such, these fundamental aspects are explored by scholars through their embeddedness in practice. However, the diversity of the theoretical and philosophical heritage of practice theories, coupled with their multifarious usage within organisation studies, means that each theorist may emphasise different aspects of practice in their research (Perriton & Hodgson, 2013: 152; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Nevertheless, exploration of these key elements reveals the temporal, situated and historically-contingent nature of practice; allowing the study of organisation to become the study of organiz*ing* (Styhre, 2011; Bjørkeng *et al.*, 2009: 147; Carlsen, 2006).

This chapter section has thus far considered: the location of practice theory within (3.1) wider social theory and (3.2) organisation studies; the philosophical

[33] Including: Jansson (2013); Kaplan and Orlikowski (2013); Yakhlef and Essén (2013); Groleau *et al*. (2012); Labatut *et al.* (2012); Gherardi and Perrotta (2011); Gherardi (2009b); Nicolini (2007); and Molloy and Whittington (2005).

traditions employed by practice theorists (3.3); and significant elements of practice (3.4). Prior to arriving to a definition of practice, the following sub-sections will first indicate prominent current debates within practice theories (3.5) and the general limitations of practice theories (3.6).

3.5 - GOING FORWARD: CURRENT CONCERNS IN THE FIELD OF 'PRACTICE'

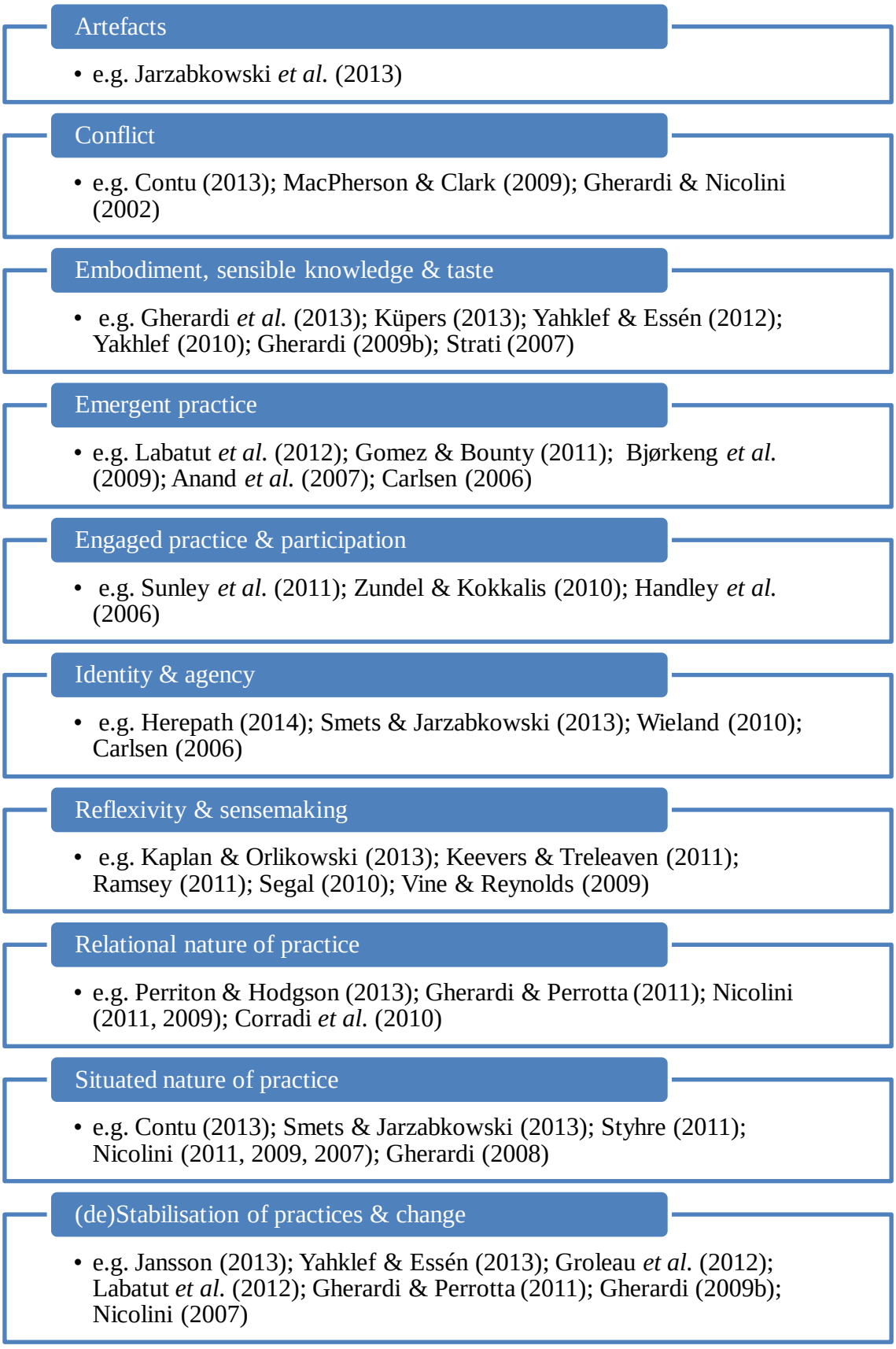
As previously delineated, the malleability of the term 'practice' has afforded impetus to the ongoing development of practice-based studies (Corradi *et al.*, 2010: 277). The rapid and varied diffusion of practice theories is evident in the wide range of theoretical concerns explored in recent publications. Figure 4, overleaf, goes some way to illuminating this diversity in highlighting some of the prevailing concerns apparent in the practice corpus, although this is by no means an exhaustive list.[34] One such concern is examined in more detail below.

THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF PRACTICE

It is pertinent to consider a recent movement to explore the wider relational scene of other practices and institutional pressures within which each individual practice is situated. Gherardi and Perrotta (2011) have termed the dual consideration of the immediate context of practices and the wider institutional context as the study of the 'texture of practices'. Similarly, Corradi *et al*. advocate that the concept of practice is built around three dimensions: as a set of interconnected activities; as a sense-making process; and as the 'social effects generated by a practice in connection with other social practices' (2010: 277-278). Following from this, Gherardi and Perrotta outlined a similar model, arguing that the broadening out of analysis — to include the wider relational context of other practices and the institutional context — facilitates the analysis of the 'micro foundation of macro phenomena' (2011: 598). In a similar vein, Nicolini outlined an empirical approach that facilitated examination of trans-local phenomena by following associations between practices and wider practice-networks, stating that 'practices are always immersed in a thick texture of interconnections' (2009: 1407). He followed this with his articulation of 'site' (2011) as suggestive of the

[34] Notably, this table broadly omits the concerns of two dominant and somewhat distinct fields within the sphere of practice theories: strategy-as-practice and organisational learning/knowledge.

Figure 4: Thematic categorization of recent concerns in practice-based studies



rootedness of action in the sites where it occurs. Additionally, he advocates that 'site' is also indicative of the plurality of occurrences from which a site emerges (i.e. it is suggestive of the multiple instances of a site within the wider relational scene of which it is a part). Furthermore, Perriton and Hodgson suggest that practice is not a readily discoverable phenomena 'out there' in the organisational world but, in fact, represents 'a relational process, the product of a complex interplay of a range of different elements' that includes the researcher (2013: 152). Their call for further research regarding the relational nature of practices — in terms of both relationships to the wider field and inter-relationships — provides a fruitful point of departure that will be further explored in this study.

3.6 - THE LIMITATIONS OF PRACTICE THEORIES

Prior to arriving at an operational and contributory definition of practice, it is pertinent to first consider theoretical limitations and methodological difficulties presented by practice theories.

THEORETICAL LIMITATIONS

The rich texture and performative nature of practice presents difficulties for scholars in their attempts to engage with practices. Whittington even goes so far as to argue that practice presents a vast prospect for empirical and theoretical inquiry, too great for any one research project (2011: 185). Practice is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. As such, any attempt to articulate the nature of a practice is a simplification and can only address specific elements of a practice. Similarly, examination of practice crystallizes extant elements of the practice. This potentially veils emergent elements of practice and the transformation of extant elements through idiosyncratic performances of practice. An interesting related example is the arbitrary demarcation of practice as either recursive or adaptive in the strategy-as-practice tradition (see Jarzabkowski, 2004). Perhaps most crucially of all, the 'unit of analysis' takes multiple forms across theoretical and empirical studies given the lack of a coherent unitary definition of what is meant by practice. Nicolini, however, suggests that this is, in fact, a positive aspect of the practice approach that enhances and adds richness to our analysis of organisational phenomena (2013: 10).

The role of the individual also poses difficulties for practice theorists. Individuals are the crossing point of several practices, presenting analytical difficulty with regard to the researcher's task of delineating which mediated activities belong to each respective practice. Delineating the boundaries of a practice is further complicated given the relational nature of practices and their location within a wider field of social practices (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011: 598). Practice itself is also inherently

differentiated across participants, for instance the access to tacit know-how of a neophyte as opposed to a more experienced participant in a practice. In a similar vein, some practice theorists have failed to acknowledge power dynamics and barriers of access to practice. Nevertheless, the multiplicity and varied nature and performance of practice lends richness to its analysis.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Given the breadth of philosophical contributions to practice theories, and their differentiated use within organisation studies, it is unsurprising that the methodological traditions and empirical methods adopted have also been diverse in nature. As such, there is no clear methodological heritage within practice theories to lend legitimation to methods utilised in future studies. This will be further discussed in section '4.3 - Data Collection' of 'Chapter III: Methodology' and is demonstrated in Figure 6 (page 100). Nevertheless, as will be discussed, many practice studies have utilised an ensemble of research methods in order to best capture the complexity of practice, an approach endorsed by Nicolini (2013: 10). As Nicolini states: 'to the extent that a practice is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon, it can only be approached through a tool-kit logic and a collage, heteroglossia, or even carnivalesque approach' (2009: 1395).

The 'skilful coping' of practitioners and the inaccessible nature of the pre-reflexive, implicit and tacit make empirical attempts to understand and examine practice challenging. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) propose seeking out breakdowns, disruptions and disturbances in organisational practice. They argue that these will disrupt the primary mode of engagement with practices — skilful coping — and allow the researcher to single out elements of practice from the relational whole (see also Yakhlef, 2010b: 41). On the other hand, Eikeland and Nicolini call for the development of theoretical and methodological approaches that '[help] practitioners articulate what they already do, and therefore somehow know' (2011: 169). They further advocate that the practice-turn has generally retained a researcher-as-spectator position, merely replacing

former theoretical 'lenses' with the 'lens of practice theory' (167-168). To this end they also call for the grounding of theory development in the 'practice of the knower' through immersion of the researcher in the action concerned, within the practice. They assert that this will present an opportunity to move away from spectator speculation and the application of extraneous concepts, models and metaphors. Instead, scholars are afforded the opportunity to generate *theoria*: theoretical insight based on self-reflective articulation from within practical experience. However, most crucially, no written or oral account can ever fully articulate the complex, myriad (and potentially emergent) nature of practice (Styhre, 2011: 120).

CONCLUSIONS: A DEFINITION OF 'PRACTICE'

The 'practice turn' within organisation studies represents an attempt to eschew traditional reliance upon scientific rationality (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 339) and the resulting *static* and artificial understandings of organisation (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Styhre, 2011: 113). Moving away from habitual focus upon the subject, texts or interactions as the central loci of organisational research (Nicolini, 2011; Yakhlef, 2010a: 409), practice scholars instead seek to explore meaning through practice. However, practice itself can be approached as either: an empirical object of study; or, as a 'way of seeing', through which to explore organisational phenomena. The latter approach arguably offers a richer avenue for inquiry: through the exploration of organisational phenomena coupled with greater recognition of the performative, contingent and situated nature of practice. In this way, as has been previously mentioned, the study of organisation becomes the study of organiz*ing* (Styhre, 2011; Bjørkeng *et al.*, 2009: 147; Carlsen, 2006). Nevertheless, what these approaches both generally have in common is a prevalent interest in the 'lifeworld' of the practitioner (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1350). This arguably reflects the commitment of practice theorists to exploring the embodied and temporal nature of practice and the recognition of our differentiated experience of and entwinement in practice.

Practice can be understood as the nexus of embodied skilful activities enacted through shared artefacts, understandings, language, discourse and action. The recursive enactment of these activities is performative and, as such, the resulting idiosyncratic disparities illuminate the temporal nature of practice. The extant structures of practice are not necessarily enduring and may be shaped through performativity or wider exogeneous institutional pressures: practice is historically contingent. Furthermore, the site-specific nature of practice is illustrative of its 'situatedness', its relationship with its specific temporal and physical location. Unlike traditional approaches to the study of organisation, the subject is de-centred and re-conceptualised as an individual 'carrier of practice'. Each practitioner has a different experience of and access to practice. The tacit know-how of a particular practice is garnered through meaningful engagement with practice, and is generally associated with experience. Furthermore, practitioners

are unique crossing points of the embodied enactment of a number of diverse practices. Ultimately, as Nicolini suggests, practices can be considered as 'primitive and foundational [...] meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing activities' (2011: 602).

Within organisation studies, 'practice theories potentially offer a new vista on all things organizational (and social)' (Nicolini, 2013: 2). Notably, there is a call for further research regarding the relational nature of practices, following from recent interest in the 'texture of practices' (Gherardi & Perrotta, 2011). In this light, the (i) effects of mutual relationships between practices and between different sites of practice, (ii) relations with the wider institutional and societal context within which a practice is located and the (iii) societal impact of practice[35] present interesting opportunities for further research and are explored in this thesis.

[35] See Corradi *et al.* (2010: 277).

CHAPTER II SUMMARY

This chapter has aimed to provide an overview of both the principal theoretical lens utilised in this study — theories of practice — as well as a contextual overview of relevant literatures relating to the research site and the researcher's journey towards the research topic and context. This chapter has suggested that the intersection of practice and festivals (and queer-film festivals in particular) presents not only a fruitful area for practical and scholarly inquiry but also constitutes a gap in current literature that this study seeks to address. The following were presented in this chapter as promising areas of study that are, hitherto, not fully explored: the interrelations between practice and between practice and its wider institutional/societal context; the mechanisms and processes underlying the organisation and enactment of festivals; the particularities and consequences of *enactment as a temporary or intermittent organisation*; the 'written' festival; the impact of festivals upon constituent communities; and the relationship between the festival and wider queer-film industry. This thesis will endeavour to shed light upon such aspects and to offer a contribution to both theories of practice and film-festival studies.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The crafting of a methodological approach appropriate to the aims of a given research project must crucially acknowledge the metatheoretical underpinnings and assumptions of the researcher (Cunliffe, 2011; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 8; Barbour, 2008; Grbich, 2007). Methods cannot be divorced from such metatheoretical assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: xi). Crucially, differing theoretical and philosophical positionings conceptualise key constructs — such as knowledge, data, the nature of social reality, meanings and historicity, amongst others — in differing and at times opposing manners. Cunliffe posits that 'considering our metatheoretical positioning provides a basis for building crafted, persuasive, consistent and credible research accounts' (2011: 647). Furthermore, in considering such philosophical underpinnings and their implications for research design, it is also important to give due consideration to the specific research methods to be employed and the techniques for data collection and analysis (Berg, 2004). Thus, it can be inferred that the weaving together of these elements in a comprehensive fashion — or, designing 'the *choreography* that establishes the *research dance*' (Berg, 2004: 31, citing Jansick, 1999) — is crucial in the crafting of an apt, credible and feasible approach to empirical research.

With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to delineate the research strategy and the ensuing specific research design adopted in this study. Accordingly, this chapter is broadly divided into four main sections that provide an overview of: (1) the research context; (2) research aims; (3) research strategy and the researcher as a situated 'knower'; and (4) the research design employed in this study. Notably, the third section will also elucidate the underlying metatheoretical assumptions that have influenced the methodological approach utilised in this study as well as providing further elaboration upon the adopted mode of enquiry. The employment of a 'practice-lens' through which to explore the research context had particular implications for the approach to this research project; a qualitative interpretivist approach was thought complementary to the exploratory nature of the project.

1: RESEARCH CONTEXT

Although this research project was inductive in nature, the adoption of a practice-lens approach and the nature of the research context — an 'intermittent' organisation manifest in an annual festival — were highly influential in the development of general guiding research aims that gave direction to the overall research strategy and design. As such, the context of the research site is described below.

Fieldwork was primarily conducted at the 26th 'BFI London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival', the largest annual queer[36] film festival in the UK.[37] This festival is arguably one of the longest-running and largest of its kind in Europe (Diva, 2011). However, the LLGFF can be principally differentiated from its international counterparts in two ways. Firstly, the festival is non-competitive and nominally seeks to 'promot[e] cinematographic art' (BFI, 2011b). This focal theme is evident in its stated aim to showcase the best of contemporary queer cinema within its 'historical context [of] retrospective programming' (Diva, 2011). Secondly, unlike many queer-film festivals, the LLGFF is organised and part-financed by a government-funded national film institute. Ownership of the festival is held by the British Film Institute, a charitable organisation[38] chiefly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the National Lottery.[39] The following two sub-sections will provide background information about the BFI followed by more specific information about the LLGFF itself.

[36] 'Queer' is utilised here to signify both LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) and queer (broadly, those who identify outwith heteronormative understandings of sexuality and/or gender). Footnote 68 in Chapter IV (page 122) provides a more detailed explanation of what is meant by this term.
[37] In 2014 the BFI LLGFF was rebranded as 'BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival'.
[38] As will be further explained overleaf, the BFI became a non-governmental public body in April 2011.
[39] In comparison, the largest queer-film festival in Spain — *Lesgaicinemad* — is organised by the LGBT community of Madrid and spearheaded by LGBT equal-rights organisation *Fundación Tríangulo*.

1.1 - THE WIDER RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

Founded by Royal Charter in 1933, the aims and undertakings of the BFI have evolved over time in response to changes in the film industry and the place of film in society. Notably, the sudden government dissolution of the UK Film Council[40] in April 2011 resulted in much of the latter organisation's funding and responsibilities being passed to the BFI. At this time, the BFI took on a role as 'a lottery distributor', with responsibility for: 'funding film development and production; [...] supporting film across the UK; film certification [...]; strategic development; industry research and statistics [...]' (UK Film Council website).[41] As such, the BFI is now the lead body for film in the UK. Alongside these responsibilities, the BFI also manages a number of additional activities[42] in line with its overarching mission to 'ensure that film is central to our cultural life' (BFI, 2011d). In addition to the aforementioned grants from the DCMS and the National Lottery, the BFI generates revenue from two other sources. Commercial activity (i.e. bar, restaurant, ticket sales, DVD sales, BFI membership) and private sponsorship/donations provide invaluable income for the BFI, especially following recent cuts in government funding.[43] Notably, the BFI also runs the UK's largest and arguably most prestigious annual film festival: the BFI London Film Festival.

[40] A non-governmental public body, set up by the Labour government in 2000 to develop and promote filmmaking in the UK, provide education and training, and to distribute government funds to film projects.
[41] See <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk>.
[42] These principally relate to film/television heritage, exhibition, distribution, publishing, sales, education and research. A table outlining the BFI's principal activities, Figure 55, is located in Appendix 1.
[43] Government funding of the BFI was cut by 15% for the financial year 2010-2011 (BFI, 2011d: 2).

1.2 - THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE LONDON LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL

"Born out of radical activism, now courted by corporate sponsors, the LLGFF can, I hope, continue to adapt – while also continuing to showcase contemporary and earlier queer cinema to a new generation, engage with new debates and enhance the lives of viewers, regardless of sexual preference."

(Robinson, 2011)

"The BFI is thrilled to be presenting the 26th LLGFF, not only because it is an essential programme of the best in contemporary queer cinema, but because it is a beloved and proven event in London's LGBT calendar."

Clare Stewart (BFI Head of Exhibition) & Amanda Nevill (BFI Chief Executive)
(2012 Festival Programme - BFI, 2012c: 5)

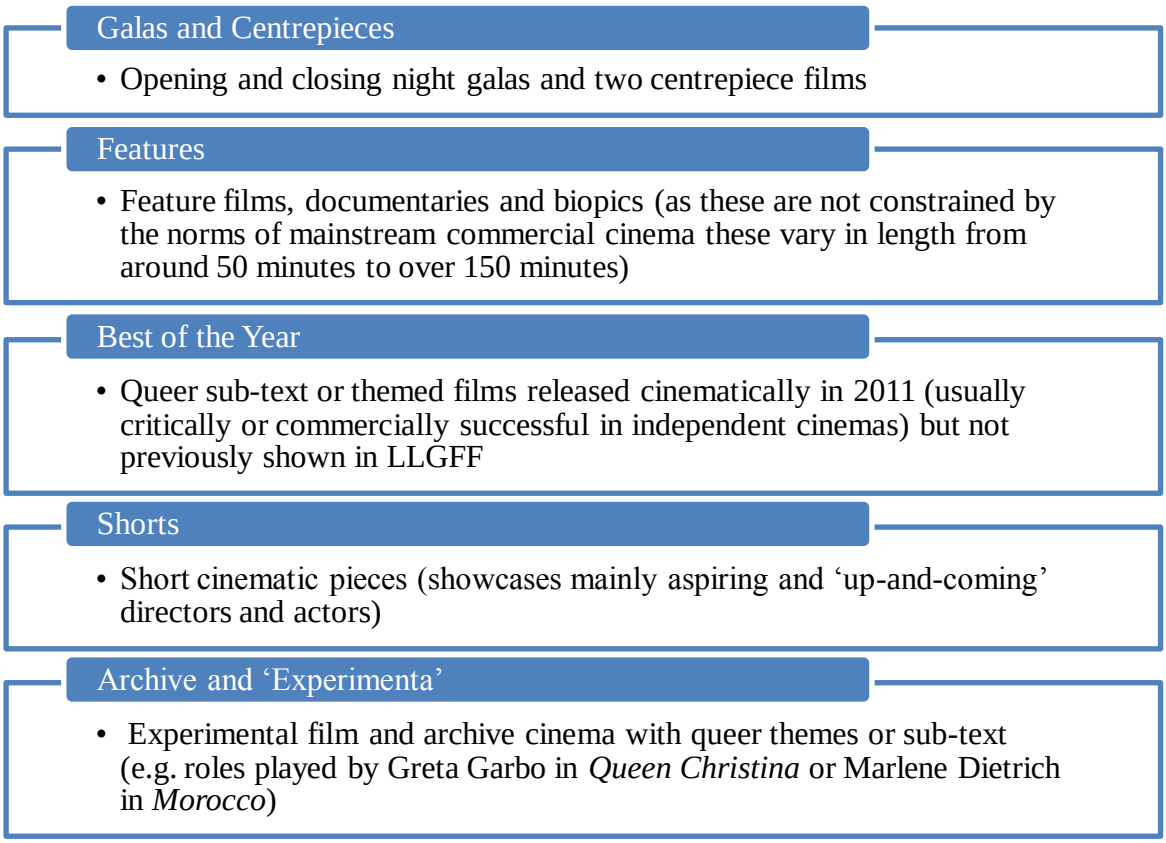
Fieldwork primarily took place at the 26th iteration of the LLGFF, which took place over ten days in March and April 2012 and attracted around 21000 attendees (BFI, 2014). The festival's physical enactment was delimited by the centrality of festival activity at the BFI Southbank.[44] This was conspicuously so in comparison to previous years wherein multiple screenings took place at venues across London and a post-festival 'LLGFF on Tour' stretched tendrils of the festival's enactment outwards in both time and space across the UK. Crucially, although by 2012 the 'festival' traditionally ran for fourteen days, the ten day 2012 festival actually represented an increase from the dramatically shortened six-and-a-half day LLGFF in 2011. The compact nature of the festival in 2011 resulted from a sudden and unexpected 15% cut in government funding to the BFI (BFI, 2011d), as part of the wider cuts to public sector funding. However, the drastic cut of the LLGFF, from fourteen days to six-and-a-half, prompted criticism of the BFI as the effective 'halving' of the LLGFF was interpreted as grossly disproportionate by some LGBT organisations and individuals.[45] The impassioned response of some was not solely attributable to cinephiles with an interest in queer cinema. As the above epigraph quotes infer and as will be argued in this study, the LLGFF is more than just a 'film festival': it has acquired currency and value as an important

[44] A BFI location map (Figure 54) and list of key dates (Figure 57) are provided in Appendix 1.
[45] For instance, the resulting 'Save the LLGFF' online petition (created by a former programmer) gathered more than 1300 signatures.

cultural event for many queer individuals. As I shall go on to further explore, the festival has a role as a 'carrier' of queer cultures and histories (Hibbert *et al.*, 2007).

Although the festival is dominated by the medium of film, the importance of the LLGFF to wider queer communities is also evident in variety of events that are run alongside the dominant cultural form of film. These include film-education lectures, exhibitions, industry-skills events for queer filmmakers, public and panel discussions, festival club nights, queer-cinematic-history lectures and LGBT community events (e.g. in 2012 a demonstration by Pink Ballroom Dancers). Nevertheless, film screenings continue to make up the bulk of the festival calendar and can be broadly divided into five main categories. Figure 5, below, delineates these categories in relation to the 2012 festival.

Figure 5: LLGFF categories of film (2012)



In recent years the LLGFF has consistently achieved a high rate of occupancy throughout the festival,[46] with most screenings selling out far in advance. While ticket sales do represent a substantial revenue stream, high overheads and significant running costs mean that the LLGFF does not actually generate profit or indeed 'break-even' (BFI, 2011d) through this

[46] See, for instance, BFI Annual Review or Annual Financial Report (BFI, 2011c or 2011d).

mechanism alone. The LLGFF does receive corporate sponsorship[47] but, nevertheless, the festival remains heavily subsidised by the BFI (BFI, 2011d), firmly anchoring the festival in the ownership of the latter.

Two further crucial aspects of the festival are noted below. Firstly, as will be further examined in this study, the annual re-enactment of the festival invokes a plurality of telos. In addition to the film-going public, the LLGFF is also attended by industry delegates: members of the press; representatives from LGBT/queer media; and individuals from the film industry, namely film buyers and distributors (BFI, 2011a). The main partners and special supporters for the 2012 LLGFF are detailed in Figures 58 and 59 in Appendix 1. As will be explored, each of these groups — and individuals within them — may hold a differing interpretation of where precisely the value of the festival lies and what they seek to attain through their involvement. Secondly, although the festival is presented by the BFI, many positions outwith core professional aspects of the festival (e.g. projectionists) are filled by individuals with short-term contracts or by volunteers.

The LLGFF is a unique event in both the cinematic and queer cultural calendar. However, this study will argue that the festival can be more fruitfully characterised as a nexus: a point of spatial and temporal connection that momentarily links a diverse assortment of individuals, communities and practices. The festival itself will be argued to be historically contingent, situated and conditioned by its responsiveness to the wider concerns of minority sexualities, manifest in the way in which the LLGFF has adapted and changed over time. This continual augmentation reflects changes in discourses of equality, queer politics, community concerns and the evolving historical context of queer cinema and culture within which the festival operates. Furthermore, for a dispersed and diverse queer population the LLGFF will be suggested to be a valuable potential point of connection with wider communities. The LLGFF will be shown to encompass a miscellaneous ensemble of practices that are in no way constrained by the organizational boundaries of the festival itself. This setting offers a rich and unique research context in which to explore the practices that interpolate the festival and the relationship between the festival and the wider creative and queer communities that interpenetrate it.

[47] See Figure 58 in Appendix 1 for a list of the main LLGFF 2012 sponsors.

2: RESEARCH AIMS

Following from an elaboration of the research context (1), it is necessary to clarify the research aims (2) of the project before going on to discuss the research strategy (3) and design (4) employed in this study in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

The previous section has provided an account of the LLGFF as a unique and interesting research context: as a point of spatial and temporal connection that momentarily links a diverse assortment of individuals, communities and practices. As explored in the previous chapter, numerous scholars have advocated the use of practice-based studies as a lens through which to study organisational phenomena.[48] In fact, Gherardi argues that practices are, in fact, the 'glue which holds together a configuration of people, artefacts and social relations' (2009a: 121). The use of a 'practice-lens' was considered fruitful and apt in the exploration of the connections, configurations and tensions that link the individuals, communities and practices that interpolate the LLGFF. Within this approach, socio-material practices are utilised as the 'point of departure' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 346) through which to explore the continually unfolding relational whole of our entwinement (352) within a complex net of interconnected practices (Nicolini, 2011: 603).

In line with this approach, as social action and human meaning emerge through social practices (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009), the initial aim of this project was to develop categorisations of practices through iterative inductive coding of data. The secondary aim was that this would elicit engagement with emergent themes and their interconnections (see Nicolini, 2011: 603) through which to explore the enactment of the festival. As such, instead of adopting an a priori hypothesis or specific line of enquiry, an exploratory research design facilitated a categorisation of data that 'emerge[d] from the experiences and perspectives of those engaged' in such practices (Yanow, 2006: 1746), albeit via the interpretation of the researcher (see Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1-6).

In summary, a 'practice-lens' approach was employed with the principal aim to inductively identify a set of practices that yielded emergent themes to consider, and from which further theoretical and empirical insights could be developed. This approach enabled

[48] For instance, Eikeland and Nicolini (2011), Nicolini (2011), Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011), Corradi *et al.* (2010), Zundel and Kokkalis (2010), Bjørkeng *et al.* (2009), Geiger (2009), Gherardi (2009a, 2009b) and Miettinen *et al.* (2009).

the researcher to remain open to unexpected or emergent insights and facilitated further examination and exploration of concepts elicited from the data itself. Thus, although a specific line of enquiry was not adopted, following from both promising areas of future study suggested by review of relevant literatures[49] and insights that arose through fieldwork and analysis, some emergent research questions were also developed.

These principal and emergent research questions are presented below[50] and considered/explored in the following chapter through analysis of the five themes that emerged from this research project.

Principal guiding research questions:

1. What are the key practices that underpin the enactment of the LLGFF?
    - In addition, how are these practices interconnected and (how) do they constitute a process?
2. What themes emerge from these practices for further exploration?
    - In relation to the nature and enactment of festivals, constituent communities, relationships etc.?

Emergent research questions:

3. How are relevant aspects of the festival (e.g. practices, material and symbolic artefacts, space, infrastructure etc.) weaved together during its enactment?
4. What are the connections, configurations and tensions that link the individuals, communities and practices that interpolate the LLGFF?
5. What place does the festival have and what role does it play for its constituent communities?
6. Given that the festival can be considered as a 'temporary organisation' that is intermittently enacted, what are the processes that support the festival's continued enactment?

[49] A concise overview of areas highlighted as interesting opportunities for further research can be found in Chapter II in the concluding sections of '1: Theories of Practice', '2: Mise-en-scène – Festivals' and also in 'Chapter II Summary'.
[50] These questions are referred to later in this thesis and, for purposes of clarity, will be labelled as RQ1 to RQ6.

3: RESEARCH STRATEGY

The importance of due consideration of the metatheoretical assumptions that underpin any research project is stressed by theorists such as Cunliffe (2011), Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 8), Barbour (2008) and Grbich (2007). This is particularly significant in the field of practice, given its previously discussed broad theoretical heritage comprised of a 'multitude of philosophical and theoretical contributors' (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009: 1350). Coupled with the diversity of research agendas and employment of practice within organisation studies, a highly diverse range of methodological approaches (with at times divergent ontological and epistemological assumptions) have been employed in the study of practice.[51] Ultimately, there is no clear methodological heritage within practice theories to lend legitimacy to methods utilised in future studies. Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) even go so far as to argue that practice-based studies lack a consistent metatheoretical backdrop. With this in mind, the purpose of this section is to clarify the metatheoretical assumptions that underpin this research project prior to the articulation of the specific research design in section four. To this end, the following sub-section (3.1) will outline the model of 'practical-rationality' proposed by Sandberg and Tsoukas, which they posit provides a coherent onto-epistemological framework for practice-based research (2011: 354). This is followed by a consideration of (3.2) interpretivism and the researcher as a 'situated knower'.

[51] This will be elaborated upon in sub-section '4.3 - Data collection'.

3.1 - PRACTICAL-RATIONALITY

As previously discussed, practice theorists seek to explain and explore human action and social meaning as emerging through social and workplace practices (Nicolini, 2011: 603 and 2009: 1391; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009). Thus, the adoption of a practice-based approach 'change[s] our basic unit of analysis from individuals and their actions to practices and their relationships' (Nicolini, 2011: 603). As primacy is afforded to practices, meaning is sought in the entwinement of ourselves, others and things in a relational whole (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 345; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1212-1213). Agents are inescapably and constantly intertwined with others and things in specific socio-material practice worlds (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 343-345; Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009). In fact, Sandberg and Tsoukas even go so far as to state that 'entwinement constitutes the logic of practice' (2011: 343).

Sandberg and Tsoukas argue that 'most management theories are unable to capture the logic of practice because they are developed within the framework of scientific rationality' (2011: 338). They propose that three interconnected assumptions underlie such inquiry: reality is constituted by discrete entities; meaning is located in subject-object relations; and the logic of practice is constituted by such relations (340). These approaches arguably remain entrenched in a *static* ontological understanding (Styhre, 2011: 113), are characterised by abstraction of organisational phenomena (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 338; Zundel & Kokkalis, 2010: 1209-1212) and render the organisational 'lifeworld' and object of study as fixed or artificial (Styhre, 2011: 113; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 339).

Conversely, Sandberg and Tsoukas proffer a metatheoretical framework of practical-rationality that they claim frames theory as a derivative of practice and is thus better placed to 'grasp the logic of practice' (2011: 338) and 'more reflective of the "richness" of practice (Weick, 2007: 14)' (2011: 339). Within these parameters concepts are not fixed or static representations but, rather, are instead understood as 'partly emergent creations' that are somewhat fashioned by the specific practices in which they are enacted (352). This open-ended approach to practice recognises the performative and situated nature of practices and facilitates an approach that considers the 'contextual richness, multiple temporalities, and connections among events and across time' (352). Finally, unlike scientific-rationality, the aim of empirical work is not to 'discover' concepts, patterns, discrete entities or abstract

properties that can fully explicate phenomena (353). Rather, practical-rationality appreciates the irreducible quality of practice (352) and devotes attention to 'the underlying (as opposed to the manifest) and cross-level elements (see Nicolini, 2009, 2010)' (Gomez & Bounty, 2011: 934). Thus, one can conclude that the aim is to examine practice as 'enacted' or 'an unfolding relational whole' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 352).

The onto-epistemological framework delineated by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) is broadly commensurable with the subjectivism-problematic delineated by Cunliffe (2011). Revising Morgan and Smircich's (1980) typology of qualitative research to a continuum, Cunliffe offers a nuanced framework through which to explore metatheoretical positionalities and research approaches. Whereas objectivism distinguishes an external enduring reality and focuses upon factual accounts (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1) involving concrete entities and enduring structures, this is not amenable to a practice-lens approach. Instead, this research project is broadly reconcilable with the subjectivism-problematic posited by Cunliffe and defined thus:

> *as historically, socially, and/or linguistically situated experience; as culturally situated understandings relative to particular contexts, times, places, individuals, and/or groups of people (relationality and durability); where there are "truths" rather than one truth; and where meanings, sensemaking, and knowledge are relative to the time, place and manner in which they are constructed – in the everyday interactions of people.*
>
> (2011: 656)

The acknowledgement of the situated nature of meaning and a contextual, negotiated social-reality facilitates pluralism and recognises the partial and subjective nature of our own research accounts (656). In conclusion, practical-rationality as delineated by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) is proposed here as broadly parallel to the subjectivism-problematic outlined by Cunliffe (2011).

A subjectivist research strategy from within the qualitative paradigm fits well with a practice-based approach and also with the initial research aim of inductive generation of an assortment of practices. Furthermore, acknowledgement of the subjective nature of research accounts in Cunliffe's subjectivism-problematic is aligned with an interpretivist epistemology that, as will be explored in the following sub-section (3.2), positions the researcher as a 'situated knower'.

3.2 - INTERPRETIVISM

Adopting a subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology is particularly suited to the aims of this project. Interpretative approaches acknowledge the multiplicity of meaning, experiences and perspectives and, in a similar vein to practice theories, explore social reality as a principally negotiated phenomenon (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007: 64). Furthermore, reality is understood as 'socially and societally embedded' and differentially experienced by subjects (Grbich, 2007: 8). Thus, the interpretivist approach is broadly aligned with the theoretical suppositions of practice theories as employed in this thesis. Moreover, the adoption of a consciously interpretivist approach offers an additional benefit: recognising the subjective nature of our own research accounts (Cunliffe, 2011: 656). Yanow highlights that adopting an interpretative approach positions:

> *substantive meaning and processes of meaning- or sense-making as the focus of research, emphasizing situated 'knowers' (researchers as well as those holding and using [...] local knowledge concerning the research topic) as well as situated 'knowns' (the settings and events that comprise the focus [...]).*
>
> (2006: 1747)

The acknowledgement of the researcher as a 'situated knower' is significant for two reasons. Firstly, this allows exploration of the impact of a priori knowledge of the researcher. In much academic writing the researcher is absent, removed from the research by a passive voice that renders the researcher 'unadorned and disembodied' (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007: 11). However, the interpretative approach facilitates a re-presenting of the researcher as possessing 'frames derived from their own life experiences' that de-limit their understanding (Grbich, 2007: 8). This is particularly noteworthy as all 'data' then becomes a construction of our own interpretations (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1), filtered through the aforementioned frames and our own sensory experience of the research context (Cunliffe, 2011: 656; Yanow, 2006). Thus, our interpretation of 'data' is, in fact, an interpretation of an interpretation and our 'assertions about the meaning of data are formed at the moment of engagement' (Grbich, 2007: 6). Additionally, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009: 6) assert that it is difficult for researchers to comprehend these frames and identify their own 'blind-spots', whereby phenomena that are imbued with normality may be ignored or go unnoticed. Nevertheless, within the interpretative approach this is not construed as a source of potential bias that should be eliminated — as it would be within the quantitative orthodoxy — as long

as the researcher's taken-for-granted assumptions (see Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 6) are addressed and challenged (Cresswell & Clark, 2011: 42-43). This is significant as this study addressed a research context and multiple communities that the researcher had some prior familiarity with or knowledge of. This has already been noted in the previous chapter[52] but is also further explored in the following sub-section and is reflected, where appropriate, within the voice and narrative style employed in 'Chapter IV: Findings'.

The second advantage of this active consideration of the relationship of the researcher to the research context relates to a criticism levelled at the practice-turn in organisation studies. Eikeland and Nicolini (2011: 167-168) argued that practice theorists have generally retained a researcher-as-spectator position, echoing Gherardi's assertion that the metaphor of the lens 'evokes a mental image of the researcher as a Sherlock Holmes intent upon the close scrutiny of a reality' (2009: 123). This dislocation of the researcher from the researched can be somewhat redressed through the re-positioning of the researcher from 'spectator' to one of immersion 'within and below' (Eikeland and Nicolini, 2011; de Laine, 2000: 16). In a similar vein, following from Weiss and Fine (2000), Cunliffe and Karunanayake highlight the importance of adequate consideration of the relationship of the researcher to the research context and participants, with whom they argue researchers have a relationship that is 'intricate and complexly interwoven with identity issues' (2013: 366).[53] This is of particular note given the potential 'insider' status of the researcher to some aspects of the research context as 'sameness' can be 'implicated and influence relationships with respondents and their willingness to speak' (375).[54] Nevertheless, McDonald highlights that whilst researchers who match the 'embodied categories of difference' that they seek to explore could be positively perceived by participants (and also, in certain aspects, by the research community) as seemingly more 'legitimate', this assumption is based upon a presupposition that denies the 'heterogeneity of cultural identities' (2013: 130).

[52] See '1 – Diegesis: My Journey Towards this Research Project'.
[53] Cunliffe and Karunanayake propose the notion of hyphen-spaces 'as a way of emphasizing not the boundaries, *but the spaces of possibility*, between researchers and respondents' (emphasis in original, 2013: 365). They proffer four hyphen-spaces of interest to ethnographers: Insiderness-Outsiderness; Sameness-Difference; Engagement-Distance; and Political Activism-Active Neutrality. Crucially, researchers may oscillate between positions within each hyphen-space and one position does not infer another (i.e. an outsider to the research context may be highly engaged).
[54] An empirical manifestation of this is noted in section 3.1 of 'Chapter IV: Findings' (page 210).

THE RESEARCHER AS A SITUATED KNOWER

> *All people in all societies inherit and bequeath frameworks of understanding and feeling about themselves and everyone else. These frameworks include various kinds of categories of persons. We find and refuse to find ourselves in these categories, live with, within and against them, but never actually without them.*
>
> (Dyer, 2002a: 1)

Researchers do not approach a project, research site or fieldwork as a 'blank canvas'. The ways in which their identity and experiences — or, 'pre-understanding' (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 9) — and approach impact upon the research terrain (and, in turn, the manner in which that terrain impacts upon the researcher) should be reflected upon and explored. The researcher's relationship to various important aspects of the festival — queer cinema, LGBTQ culture/history and LGBTQ communities — has already been discussed (see section 1 'Diegesis' of Chapter II) and a consideration of how the researcher's identity/experiences and approach impacted upon the research terrain and data collection are considered below. The manner in which the research experience has affected the researcher is considered later in this thesis (see 'Reflections and Lessons' within section 2 of Chapter V).

Arguably, the most significant, broad and basic delineation of insider/outsider in relation to the festival and its constituent communities relates to identification with the LGBTQ community. As a white (cisgender) lesbian woman in my mid/late-twenties who identifies as 'gay', has a large and diverse group of LGBTQ friends, and a long history of involvement with LGBTQ groups, there are many aspects of the LGBTQ community with which I identify and, I feel, I have a deep understanding of and affinity with. Furthermore, as someone that has a strong interest in and has formally studied queer cinema, I am enculturated to the motifs, themes, concerns, history and notable names and faces of the industry. Such information was not stated or made explicit during participant recruitment or interviews (and was, perhaps, not immediately apparent). As will be discussed at various junctures in the following chapter, notably, participants' need to establish whether or not I was a member of their LGBTQ community emerged as universally significant. Similarly, as highlighted in the following chapter, many participants sought to (subtly) test my knowledge or understanding of queer cinema or current/historical queer socio-political concerns. In ascertaining these details, I believe, participants were more open in our discussions and spent significantly less time explaining details, contextual information or causal relationships that

would be evident to a community member. Furthermore, I felt that they, generally, relaxed and were less guarded, viewing me less as an outsider or interloper seeking information for my own purposes and more as someone who 'innately understood' and had a genuine interest in the future of the festival.

My understanding of the LGBTQ community was also loosely informed by previous engagements with the study of sexuality and other intellectual resources encountered that consider: queer cinema; queer culture and history; film, identity and culture; sexuality and organisations; fragmented (diaspora) communities; gay and lesbian studies. Consideration is given below to some key aspects of the study of sexuality after a brief outline of how the researcher's position affected data interpretation.

As our 'assertions about the meaning of data are formed at the moment of engagement', the researcher's positionalities as an 'insider' to (some aspects of) the LGBTQ community and somewhat encultured to queer cinema undoubtedly shaped the interpretation of data, in both the moment of collection and in subsequent analysis. For instance, as a community member the researcher could not help but perceive research participants according to a series of commonly understood LGBTQ sub-cultural 'categories' or 'labels', although at times these would evolve as our conversations continued and I learned more about them and their interests. Furthermore, given the process-orientated nature of the practice-lens approach and that the initial research aim was to identify practices that underpin the enactment of the LLGFF, the researcher's attention in the moment of fieldwork was, perhaps, more keenly attuned to activities rather than 'artefacts' (ample critical attention and reflection was devoted to artefacts during the overall period of data collection and analysis). Nevertheless, during the processes of data analysis, I did try to reflect upon my own 'blind spots' and my assumptions and emergent constructs were challenged through conversations with others, both LGBTQ and otherwise.

The Study of Sexuality

Early scholarly exploration of sexuality was politically motivated and ideologically informed by feminism and gender studies, becoming manifest as 'Gay and Lesbian Studies'. Underpinned by essentialist notions of sex and gender the relationship between sexual

identity and the subject was understood as one whereby both gender and sexuality are innate fixed features of the individual psyche. Essentialism is manifest in the dichotomous logic that characterises humanist ontology (Sullivan, 2003: 50) and presents an understanding of sexuality through dualisms and binary oppositions that flow from and through one another: heterosexual/homosexual, normal/aberration, moral/immoral reproductive/destructive etc.

Sociological enquiry, informed by poststructuralist debate, began to separate the nexus of sex-gender-sexuality, dismantling the hegemonic construction of their relationship as consequential (Chauncey, 1994: 48) into physical sex (i.e. the body) and those facets of identity (i.e. gender and sexuality) that could be argued to be historically and culturally informed (Bowring & Brewis, 2009: 362). The body of works that has come to be known as 'queer theories' has a diverse heritage and a somewhat contested meaning and usage, as Jagose states 'queer itself can have neither a fundamental logic, nor a consistent set of characteristics' (1996: 96). However, it would be impossible not to acknowledge the significance of several key works: Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1973); Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1980); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*; and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993a).

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault highlights the historically contingent understanding of sexuality and corresponding shift in consideration of sex as an action to sex as a function of the psyche 'the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species' (Foucault, 1980: 43). Foucault's second main contribution to queer theory was his consideration of the dichotomous logic that positioned homosexuality as the 'other' in binary opposition to a reified heterosexuality (Herdt, 1997: 5). Thus, a homosexual identity can be argued to be historically and socially contingent, to rely upon the construction of boundaries (Gamson, 1996b), and its position in relation to an external 'other', heterosexuality and the heteronormative society (Fuss, 1991: 1). In *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler draws upon the work of a variety of scholars in her discussion of gender as a 'stylised repetition of acts' (Butler, 1990: 141). Similarly, de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1973) advocated that gender did not follow consequentially from a foundational corporeal body (i.e. is not innate), and instead could be understood as a learned set of appropriate and socially sanctioned attributes and actions. Unlike most sociological thought of the time that advocated gender as socially constructed (Williams *et al.*, 2009: 32), Butler dismisses the possibility of a cohesive socially constructed gender identity. Instead she postulates that the gendered self

is 'structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional discontinuity, reveal the [...] groundlessness of this "ground"' (1990: 141). What Butler intends by this is to advocate that the performative effect of the repetition of these acts through a regulatory frame, over time, create an impression of a natural gender identity that does not in fact exist. In *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) Sedgwick addresses the paradigmatic tension between the 'universalising' positioning of homosexuality within a normative discourse as opposed to a 'minoritising' understanding of homosexuality as a distinct identity that underlies much of the Lesbian and Gay studies literature (Hall, 2003: 69; Sedgwick, 1990: 90).

Overall, queer theory represents an attempt to develop a new way of thinking, not just 'new labels for old boxes' (Duggan, 1992: 11) but a radical deconstruction of the normative discourses that have shaped our understanding of the central tenets of identity and social/cultural norms (Smith, 1996: 280). However, LGBT individuals may feel that abstract theory is of little significance to their everyday lived experiences. Crucially, queer theories have continued to develop and have attracted scholarly interest across a range of disciplines as the potential of 'queering' our normative understandings has been more widely recognised (e.g. see Parker's 2001 article 'Fucking management: queer, theory & reflexivity').

In summary, given the exploratory nature of this inductive project coupled with the framework of practical-rationality, a qualitative subjectivist and interpretivist research strategy was considered to be most appropriate. Following from this outline of the underlying frameworks of this research project, the subsequent section will go on to delineate the specific nature and details of the research design employed in this study.

4: RESEARCH DESIGN

Following from an outline of the research context (1), the research aims of this project (2) and the research strategy adopted (3), this section will provide an overview of the research design utilised in this study. Berg stresses the need for detailed planning in the crafting of research design in order to ensure ethical considerations are given due reflection and the design is both fit-for-purpose and feasible (2004: 31-41). In 'an effort to foresee any possible glitches that might arise' (32), Berg provides a comprehensive list of considerations and questions that a researcher should contemplate in the shaping of research design. These include, but are not limited to:

- Where will research be undertaken?
- Amongst what group(s) of people?
- What constitutes 'data'?
- Which data collection strategy(/ies)?
- Which data collection techniques?
- How will data be analysed?
- How will data be disseminated?
- Access arrangements
- Constraints of time and money
- Can the research be undertaken alone or is assistance required?
- What measures will be in place to ensure ethical standards are met?

(2004: 31-41)

In the crafting of a research design the researcher must endeavour to address pertinent questions such as these and to give due consideration to important concerns such as ethics. The weaving together of these elements into a comprehensive plan has been considered as 'the *choreography* that establishes the *research dance*' (Jansick [1999] in Berg, 2004: 31; see also Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: xiii).

Following from the elaboration of a research framework in the previous sections, the remainder of this chapter will articulate more specifically the research design adopted in this project and is subsequently divided into four sub-sections. The first sub-section provides information about the location and timetable for fieldwork (4.1) and the second outlines the ethical considerations raised by this project and the arrangements put in place to ensure due care at all times (4.2). The third will elaborate upon the data collection techniques adopted (4.3), followed by an explanation of the techniques for data analysis (4.4) and, finally, a chapter summary.

4.1 - FIELDWORK

The initial selection of the LLGFF as a unique and interesting research setting was based upon prior experience of the researcher as a previous attendee of both the LLGFF and an international European counterpart, *Lesgaicinemad*. Fieldwork was principally conducted at the festival itself, with observation and interviews taking place at the BFI Southbank building and its immediate surroundings. The timeline for fieldwork was predominantly demarcated by the temporal boundaries of the festival itself, from Friday 23 March 2012 to Sunday 1 April 2012. However, some additional interviews were conducted in the two weeks following the festival as these interviewees were unavailable during the festival. Furthermore, in the collation of documents and artefacts the period considered extended from 1 March 2011 to 30 April 2012 in order to examine the full 'festival year'. Given the previous experience of the researcher at the LLGFF[55], a degree of purposive sampling — whereby 'researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about a group to select subjects who represent the population' (Berg, 2004: 36) — was undertaken. This was primarily to ensure that many of the diverse individuals, communities and practices that engage with the festival could be accessed in order to yield as wide a range of rich data as possible.

[55] Of the six-and-a-half day LLGFF in 2011, I spent six days at the festival and attended and observed eighteen events (twelve films and six events) as well as informal observation of the festival itself. The films selected reflected the wider programme of films that form the festival programme. Additionally, a number of queer community-centred events and queer-filmmaking-community events were also attended.

4.2 - ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

> ***"The conditions of fieldwork (paradoxes, ambiguities and dilemmas) that is qualitative, by way of contrast to quantitative research inquiry (positivistic-orientated and impersonal), that put the researcher in direct contact with people to form various types of relationships (power, personal and social) make fieldwork inherently problematic (Fabian, 1991)."***
>
> *(in de Laine, 2000: 16)*

As the above epigraph quote illuminates, the nature of qualitative research — and in particular the relationship between the researcher and research participants (de Laine, 2000: 25) — raises particular ethical considerations that should be reflected upon by the researcher. However, the nature of qualitative research is such that all ethical problems and dilemmas 'cannot be adequately anticipated and usually emerge *ex post factum*' (2000: 1). Nevertheless, all due care should be taken to protect both the researcher and research participants throughout and following any study (Berg, 2004: 32, 43-74). This sub-section will delineate the measures taken by the researcher to both secure ethical approval for this project[56] and, crucially, to safeguard research participants from 'issues of harm, consent, privacy, and the confidentiality of data' (Berg, 2004: 43, referencing Punch, 1994). Where ethical considerations are somewhat linked to the specific data collection techniques in use they will be discussed in the following sub-section '4.3: Data Collection'.

The framework of this study is such that the researcher did not anticipate that involvement would place research participants under any personal or professional risk or harm. No problems or concerns of this nature were encountered during the fieldwork period or afterwards. Potential interviewees were made aware of the nature and purposes of the research during initial recruitment stages. To ensure informed consent, this was reiterated through a 'Participant Information Sheet' prior to commencement of interviews and explicit consent was given for their involvement. This document also

[56] Ethical approval was granted by the School Ethics Committee (School of Management) of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC), University of St Andrews. The 'Ethical Approval Letter' is included in Appendix 3.

advised that participants did not have to answer any questions that they did not wish to answer and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were made aware that the audio-recording of their interview would be destroyed following transcription by the researcher and their explicit permission was sought to use their anonymised interview transcript for the purposes of this research. Furthermore, participants were reassured that every effort would be taken to ensure the confidentiality of their data — raw data being stored in secure encrypted files — and that results would be presented in such a way as to preserve this. In the post-interview debriefing session, participants were provided with the contact details of the researcher (and principal supervisor) should they wish to withdraw from the study in the future. Where interview participants were recruited via a gatekeeper figure[57] (see Berg, 2004: 43), every effort was taken to stress that they were under no obligation to take part in the study, both in the information provided prior to interview and at the interview itself.

[57] Seven participants were recruited through the snowballing technique, six of whom were put in contact with the researcher via a superior or supervisor.

4.3 - DATA COLLECTION

As previously discussed, within organisation and management studies the diversity of the 'practice-turn' is apparent in the multiplicity of theoretical/philosophical underpinnings and divergent research agendas manifest in the field. Consequentially, this diversity is also evident in the research approaches and specific methods employed in empirical practice-based research, as Figure 6 overleaf illustrates. Thus, a review of such studies reveals the historical lack of a 'legitimated' accepted empirical approach to data collection.[58] However, as can also be ascertained from Figure 6, in recent years an ensemble of interviews, observation, and document analysis has surfaced as a popular and fruitful collective approach to data collection. Qualitative research can be said to be 'inherently multi-method' given its objective to secure as in-depth an understanding of a given phenomenon as possible (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 4). Furthermore, the complexity of practice and the desire to elicit as rich a data set as possible lends weight to the development of an ensemble of research methods (Nicolini, 2013: 10), through which to explore the 'relational whole' of our entwinement in practice. Nicolini advocates that 'to the extent that a practice is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon, it can only be approached through a tool-kit logic and a collage, heteroglossia, or even carnivalesque approach' (2009: 1395).

To this end, in order to elicit as rich a data set as possible this study utilised an 'ensemble' of research methods, including: interviews, observation, field-diary, and document analysis. This assemblage of methods parallels other current empirical practice-based projects within organisation and management studies. Figure 7 (page 101) delineates the specific types and volumes of data collected and the rest of this sub-section will provide an overview of each research method.

[58] Within the field of management learning, Perriton and Hodgson provide an interesting brief discussion outlining how different methodological approaches best suit the exploration of different aspects of management learning and knowledge, providing examples of studies that have adopted each methodological approach (2013: 152-155).

Figure 6: Research methods used in recent empirical 'practice-as-a-way-of-seeing' studies

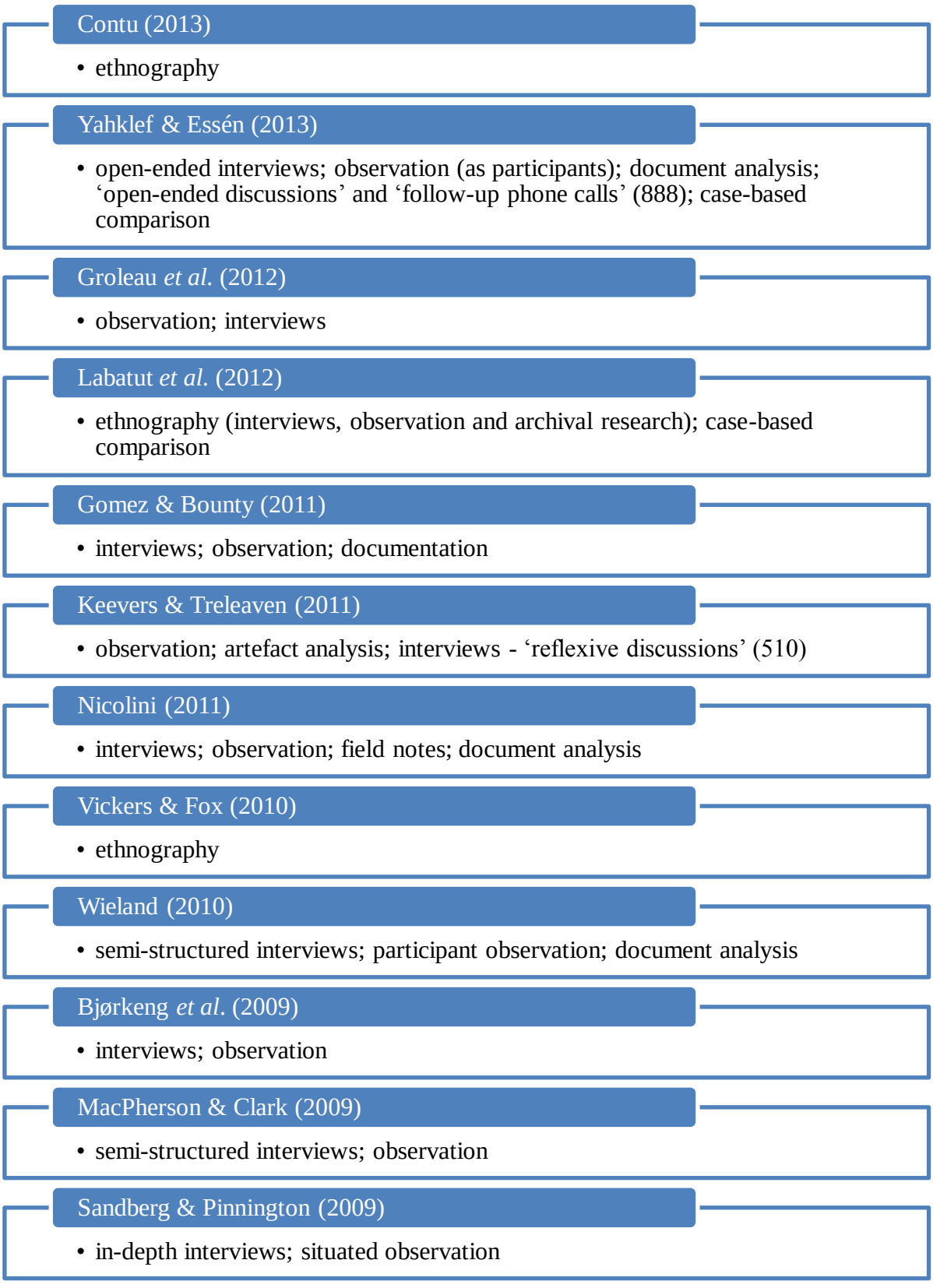


Figure 7: Table indicating types of data collected for this study

Data Type	Details
Interviews	**21 Interactions with interviewees** • **15 Formal interviews, audio-recorded and transcribed** o ranging in length from 30 to 70 minutes (majority 40-45 mins.) o 11 conducted in person o 3 conducted via telephone o 1 conducted via Skype • **6 Informal/unplanned conversations with interviewees** o ranging in length from 5 to 10 minutes o recorded in field-diary
Observation	**80 hours (approximately) of observation during the 26th LLGFF, from Friday 23 March 2012 to Sunday 1 April 2012.** Observation took place in various spaces within the Southbank[59] and included attendance at and observation of 32 films and events, listed below.[60] • **17 Films** **(including official introductions and Q&A sessions)** [61] o 1 Archive film o 2 'Best of the Year' films o 4 Documentary films o 9 Feature films o 1 Gala film o **15 Events** ***Attendance and observation:*** o 1 BFI event (BFI *Mediatheque* event) o 2 Community networking events (trans filmmaking and Southbank Surfing) o 6 Festival club nights (public) o 2 LLGFF club nights (closed) o 1 Panel discussion event (trans representation)

[59] Further detail is available in the more comprehensive version of this table, Figure 62, Appendix 2.
[60] Further detail regarding the specific films/events attended can be found in Figure 63, Appendix 2. A copy of the (abridged) PDF version of the festival programme, Figure 60, is also available in Appendix 2.
[61] These were recorded as accurately as possible in the field diary. In some cases, an audio-visual recording of the Q&A session was available on the BFI website and, if available, this was consulted during the transcription of the research diary.

	Observation only: ○ 1 Community arts event (Cruising for Art) ○ 1 Community group demonstration (Pink Dancers) ○ 1 Political community demonstration (Dyke March)
Documents & Artefacts	**Documents, articles, web pages, e-mails and press releases were collated over a period from 1 March 2011 to 30 April 2012.** These have, where they contained relevant information, been included in the analysis, either as part of the fieldwork diary (i.e. programme notes) or coded as a separate entity. • **Extensive website monitoring (over the 14 month period described above)** ○ BFI website ○ LLGFF website • **Official LLGFF media and documents** ○ 60 (approx.) BFI Member weekly 'news' e-mails ○ 38 page LLGFF print programme (for comparison, the 2011 and 2013 programmes were also consulted) ○ 32 printed pages of LLGFF 'programme notes' relating to individual films (provided at festival) ○ LLGFF physical marketing materials (included in BFI Member monthly postal delivery[62] and distributed at the LLGFF itself) ○ 15 LLGFF e-mail press releases ○ LLGFF stream of BFI live (online audio-visual material) • **Other festival and community websites / social-networking accounts monitored** ○ LLGFF Facebook account ○ BFI Facebook and Twitter accounts ○ 'Fringe!' (queer film festival) website and Facebook and Twitter accounts ○ 'Diva' (magazine) Twitter account and website ○ 'The Most Cake' Twitter account and website ○ 'Peccadillo Pictures' (LGBT film distributor) Twitter account and website ○ Pink News website (online queer community news website) • **Community media** ○ 13 'monthly' print issues of DIVA magazine ○ 4 print issues of g3 (free magazine available in LGBT venues) ○ 50 (approx.) Peccadillo Pictures weekly 'mailing-list' e-mails ○ 'HomoLAB 39' (queer cultural news podcast featuring an

[62] The BFI sends members a 'What's On' calendar each month as well as a comprehensive booklet detailing screenings, events, BFI activities, and upcoming seasons/festivals.

	interview with some of the LLGFF 2012 programming team) on GayStarNews website • **News Reports** ○ 1 Channel 4 news report regarding LLGFF 2012 (including interview with Senior Programmer)

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are one of the most common forms of data collection within the qualitative tradition (King, 2004: 11). As Berg (2004) notes however, there remains little consensus as to how to go about them. Within the subjectivist interpretative tradition, the interviewee is not regarded as a mere static 'respondent' but rather as a participant in the process. Similarly, rather than a list of questions, a qualitative interviewer may utilise a thematic interview guide (King, 2004: 15) and allow interviewees to direct, to some degree, the direction of the interview (Stroh, 2004: 203). However, some critics (i.e. feminist) of research methodologies posit that the elucidation of a qualitative interview as a 'conversation with a purpose' (Stroh, 2004: 203) creates a false intimacy that ultimately veils the fact that research participants remain subjects of an empirical study. Bosk and de Vries reflect on this, noting that '[t]here is a risk inherent in any fleeting human relationship […], the hurt of realising that however differently it felt in the moment, one was used as the means to an end' (2004: 253). The engineering of the researcher as a 'friendly stranger' (Cotterill, 1992) seeks to negate the possibility for an exploitative false intimacy without precluding the collection of rich data. In line with the interpretivist problematic, it should be noted that the interview itself is a social encounter with both material and sensible elements (Pink, 2009: 81-82). This is particularly relevant in the case of telephone interviews, whereby there is a loss of 'symbolic visual clues' (Berg, 2004: 61) that would ordinarily aid the researcher and enrich the data collected.

As a part of this study interviews were conducted with a variety of participants and, as previously outlined, an element of purposive sampling was adopted. Attempts to capture interview data that reflected diverse aspects from 'across' the festival were also

facilitated by the multiple roles occupied by many of the interviewees, evidenced in Figure 8 below. Indeed, this illustrates how fifteen formal interviews yielded seventy-five different relationships and interactions. Interviews were primarily semi-structured pre-arranged 'interviews'. Additionally, accounts of any 'conversation' with the interviewees (before, after, or completely separate to the interview) were entered as fully as could be recalled into the field-diary at the earliest opportunity. Where possible, interviewees were contacted prior to the festival via e-mail to request an interview. However, as volunteers were only accessible via the 'gatekeeper' figure of the Volunteers' Coordinator in this instance the snowballing recruitment technique was utilised (see Berg, 2004: 36).

Figure 8: Interviewees

Interviewee	Number
LLGFF Festival Programmer	4 (of 5) and 1 former
LLGFF Senior Programmer	1 (of 1)
LLGFF Volunteer	5 (of 30) and 4 former
LLGFF Industry Coordinator	1 (of 2)
LLGFF Volunteers Coordinator	1 (of 1)
LLGFF Delegate	3 and 1 former
LLGFF audience member (past or present)	15 *(& the researcher)*
BFI Press Office	1
BFI permanent staff member	3
Film distributor	1
Film-festival programming experience	11
Filmmaker	3
(Currently) involved[63] in a queer community organisation	9[64]
Involved in 'Fringe!' queer film/arts festival	9
Involved with LGBT online media	2

Interviews mainly took place within the BFI — in the Delegate Centre, Atrium or 'Benugo Bar & Kitchen' — or at a nearby location and participants were encouraged to select the venue themselves. As de Laine posits, '[a]ccess has been linked with important elements of building rapport, like "establishing trust and familiarity, showing genuine interest, assuring confidentiality and not being judgemental"' (de Laine 2000:

[63] What is meant by the use of 'involved' in these instances is not mere participation but that participants occupy an official role.
[64] The figures in this final section may be higher as interviewees were not specifically asked about this.

41, citing Glassner & Loughlin, 1987: 35). As noted in the fieldwork diary and in sub-section '3.1 - Protecting Membership' of the following chapter, many of the research participants were keen to establish that the researcher had a genuine interest in the festival and the wider communities, perhaps in order to establish such 'trust and familiarity'. Every effort was made to ensure that interviewees felt comfortable; the researcher endeavoured to build a certain rapport with research participants and, where appropriate, reassured them of a genuine interest in the festival and the wider communities (as previously noted in sub-section 3.2 of this chapter).

Semi-structured interviews conducted as part of this study were all audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. During the interview, rather than a list of specific questions, an interview guide was used (this is included in Appendix 2 as Figure 61). Some aspects of the interview remained universal — for instance King recommends a focus on specific situations and action sequences (2004: 11) — and all interviewees were asked to give an account of the activities and events of a 'typical day during the festival' at an early stage of the interview. However, the overall 'feel' of the interview was relatively conversational: interviewees were allowed to direct the content of the interview to a certain degree and care was taken not to 'consult' the interview guide particularly often. Although the interviews were recorded, some additional notes were taken during the interview regarding bodily reactions, hesitations and facial expressions, as de Laine suggests (2000: 147).

A second aspect of the semi-structured interviews is outlined below. Given the pre-reflexive nature of practice that results from our inescapable entwinement in the world of socio-material practices, there remains a methodological difficulty in accessing practice. Sandberg and Tsoukas advocate that focusing on activities rather than subjects can 'revea[l] patterns of sociality, tool use, and empowerment' (2011: 346). Crucially, they advocate seeking out breakdowns, disruptions and disturbances in organisational practice. They argue that these will disrupt the primary mode of engagement with practices — skilful coping — and allow the researcher to single out elements of practice from the relational whole (see also Yakhlef, 2010b: 41). Following from Heidegger (1927), Sandberg and Tsoukas argue that there are two principal forms of breakdowns: temporary and complete. It is temporary breakdowns that provide an opportunity to

explore the relational whole of socio-material practice as practitioners move from 'absorbed coping' to thematic deliberation (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 344). However, they warn against complete breakdowns as 'the entwined logic of practice becomes concealed and, instead, practice presents itself as an array of discrete entities with specific abstract properties' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 346). Nevertheless, they argue that temporary breakdowns can be both found (first-order) and created (second-order) by the researcher (347). Some aspects of the interview guide utilised in this thesis sought to employ an element of first-order temporary breakdowns by seeking out: (1) thwarted expectations; (2) the emergence of deviance and boundary crossings; (3) and awareness of differences (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 346-349).[65] Sandberg and Tsoukas further argue that 'deviations emerge when new discourse items are introduced or new actions appear' that allow the researcher to see what is significant to the practitioner (349). Therefore, interviewees were asked about the impact to them and their activities of severe financial cuts to the festival in 2011. Furthermore, temporary breakdowns can result when practitioners become aware of different practices (or the possibility of different practices), which Sandberg and Tsoukas argue can illuminate what is significant in their own practice (2011: 349). This was considered through examination of how practitioners responded to the emergence in 2011 of the 'Fringe!' film festival.

Thus, semi-structured interviews were utilised in order to explore the aspects outlined above whilst also facilitating open exploration and allowing scope for improvisational response by the researcher 'in the moment' to follow emergent points of interest within an interview (Yanow, 2009: 192).

OBSERVATION

Given the inductive nature of this research project, observation was a particularly useful research tool. However, observation is a skilled practice in itself and

[65] During analysis this was attempted through the consideration of the question 'What are the teleological structures in place [against which actions of practitioners make sense]?' (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 348).

the researcher does not always occupy the same 'observational role' throughout the fieldwork. De Laine (2000) provides a succinct overview of Gold's (1958) model of the four modes of observation: *complete-participant* whereby the researcher occupies an almost 'native' role; *complete-observer* wherein the researcher is completely detached from social interaction, usually used in public settings where people are anonymous (105); and the two middling modes that involve both *participant-as-observer* and *observer-as-participant*, where the latter gives slightly more prominence to observation and the former to participation. Researchers may have to employ more than one mode depending upon the specific research aims and context. Referring to Coffey (1996), de Laine states that the '[r]eality of fieldwork is that involvement covers not only being an observer, but also being an actor, author, teller and writer' (2000: 149).

In this study, some elements of observation could be conceived of as from the perspective of 'complete observer'. For instance, observation — as a festival attendee — in the public spaces of the festival: the bar areas, the hallways, the audience waiting to enter the cinema screen, etc. Within these spaces however, these instances could also be considered as paralleling the observer-as-participant or even participant-as-observer mode. Eikeland and Nicolini call for the grounding of theory development in the 'practice of the knower' through immersion of the researcher in the action concerned, within the practice (2011: 169). They stipulate that this will present an opportunity to move away from spectator speculation and the application of extraneous concepts, models and metaphors. Instead researchers are afforded the opportunity to generate *theoria*: theoretical insight based on self-reflective articulation from within practical experience. It was impossible for me to occupy a participant-as-observer position in terms of some aspects of the festival enactment, such as organisation or industry networking. However, as someone with an interest in and relative familiarity with queer cinema, I was able to conduct observation at film screening from within an participant-as-observer position (as an informed audience member). Additionally, as someone with experience of participating in and also running queer community groups, I was able to conduct observation at community events from the perspective of participant-as-observer. The relevance of researcher embeddedness in the practical accomplishment of fieldwork is further elaborated upon by Pink (2009).

In total, as Figure 7 (page 101) shows, over eighty hours of observation were amassed over the nine and a half days of the festival. This was mainly undertaken in key areas (such as the cinemas, Delegate Centre, Benugo café/bar area, foyer, ticket hall, Southbank entrance, atrium and BFI shop) and in spaces of temporary congregation (such as the hallways outside of cinema screens or the Mediatheque). This also included attendance at seventeen films (including introductions and audience Q&A sessions following the screenings) and fifteen LLGFF events.[66]

The field-diary notes from my initial period of observation were wide-reaching in scope and relatively indiscriminate in their descriptions, recording my observations of who was present and the activities and conversation topics that they were engaged in. However, time was taken between each period of observation to reflect upon the nature of the observations, whilst bearing in mind that this data was already subject to shaping via the researcher's interpretative frames (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1) and paying particular attention to aspects that were unexpected or surprising. As such, an element of iterative inductive data analysis was conducted parallel to data collection. The gradual identification of sensitising concepts then gave direction to my research, at times enabling an element of selection (for instance, devoting more effort to transcribing some of the Q&A questions word-for-word than others).

Observational notes were taken in 'real-time' whenever possible; or, as advised by de Laine (2000: 166), short notes were taken and then elaborated on at the earliest opportunity. As previously noted however, field notes are not 'raw' data but are already subject to the interpretative frames of the researcher and imbued with subjective meaning (Coffey, 1996: 66; in de Laine, 2000). Furthermore, de Laine references Emerson *et al.*'s (1995) observation that field-notes contain two 'orientations': the *observations* of the researcher, albeit already subject to the frames of our own experience and understanding (Cunliffe, 2011: 656; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1); and the *personal reactions* of the researcher to the research context. Observation notes generated in this study comprised both orientations in order to capture potential insights emanating from the researcher's relatively unique position as a participant-as-observer

[66] Figure 63, located in Appendix 2, provides a list of festival events and films attended.

and within-and-below 'knower' rather than an external spectator (see Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011).

DOCUMENTS AND ARTEFACTS

Documents and artefacts — including web-page screenshots, e-mails, press releases, audio-visual news reports, community podcasts, social-networking updates, and articles in community media — were collated over a period from 1 March 2011 to 30 April 2012. This was, in part, an effort to capture an element of the annual planning of the festival (and anticipation of its enactment). However, given the severe cuts to the LLGFF in 2011, this was also useful in capturing material that could be used to generate a better understanding of possible 'temporal breakdowns' to be discussed in the interviews. Crucially, this process was entirely subjective and conditioned by the a priori knowledge and interpretative frames of the researcher (Cunliffe, 2011; Grbich, 2007). As such, this process was entirely vulnerable to Alvesson and Sköldberg's criticism that it is difficult for researchers to identify their own 'blind-spots' and as such phenomena that are imbued with normality for the researcher may go unnoticed (2009: 6). Nevertheless, I endeavoured to collate as much material as possible from a variety of sources and postpone deciding whether or not each item was valuable to the research project until after an initial period of inductive coding. Thus, it is considered that the documents and artefacts finally examined (outlined in Figure 7) have undergone a mechanism of selection informed by other data from the fieldwork.

In summary, this study utilised an 'ensemble' of research methods — interviews, observation, field-diary, and document analysis — in order to elicit as rich a data set as possible and from which to conduct data analysis. The following sub-section (4.4) will provide a brief outline of the approach to data analysis prior to an overall chapter summary.

4.4 - DATA ANALYSIS

Following from an overview of (1) the research context, (2) the research aims and (3) the general research strategy, the final element to consider in the articulation of research design is (4) the manner of data analysis.

Whilst some initial data analysis took place during the fieldwork period — notably in the development of sensitising concepts that gave direction to observation — the formal analysis of data was conducted after data collection. Audio recordings of interviews, print artefacts and handwritten observational field-notes were transcribed by the researcher, taking care to preserve as much detail as possible (for instance, behavioural asides during interviews [Berg, 2004: 61; de Laine, 2000: 147]). As previously noted, the initial research aim was not to explore an a priori designated line of enquiry but, rather, to develop categorisations of practices through iterative inductive coding of data. The subsequent aim was that this would elicit emergent themes through which to explore these practices and their interconnections (see Nicolini, 2011: 603). As such, the analysis of data elicited through this exploratory research design aimed to facilitate a categorisation of data that emerges from practice (Yanow, 2006: 1746) and, subsequently, these practices became the departure point for secondary analysis (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 346) of emergent themes and aspects of the practice field.

Initially, a sample of transcribed data was subject to a process of open-coding, whereby codes were identified and applied to sections of data (i.e. a clause or a few sentences) in an unrestricted manner. This was continued until a point of 'saturation' (see Berg, 2004) was reached and no new codes were emerging. Following from this, an initial inductive categorisation of the codes took place to create a preliminary coding framework, guided somewhat by recurrent features and motifs within the data. These clusters were labelled as preliminary themes and practices. This process initially yielded ten thematic groupings and preliminary findings were presented to a panel of academics within the School of Management during academic review. The ten initial thematic groupings included: Safeguarding, Legitimising, Gatekeeping, Negotiating Boundaries, Educating, Community Networking, Evaluating Film, Managing Expectations, Pursuing Own Agendas and Transgressing Norms.

Subsequent to this, the rest of the transcribed data was analysed and a further period of iterative coding took place. This yielded 201 codes in total.[67] Furthermore, additional analysis and re-examination of these clusters — paying particular attention to 'meaningful patterns, stances and concerns' (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013: 889) as well as recurrent motifs — resulted in a refinement of the practices and thematic groupings identified and an additional conceptual layer of 'categories' was developed. For purposes of clarity, the place of each label within the overall analytical layering is indicated in the below Figure 9.

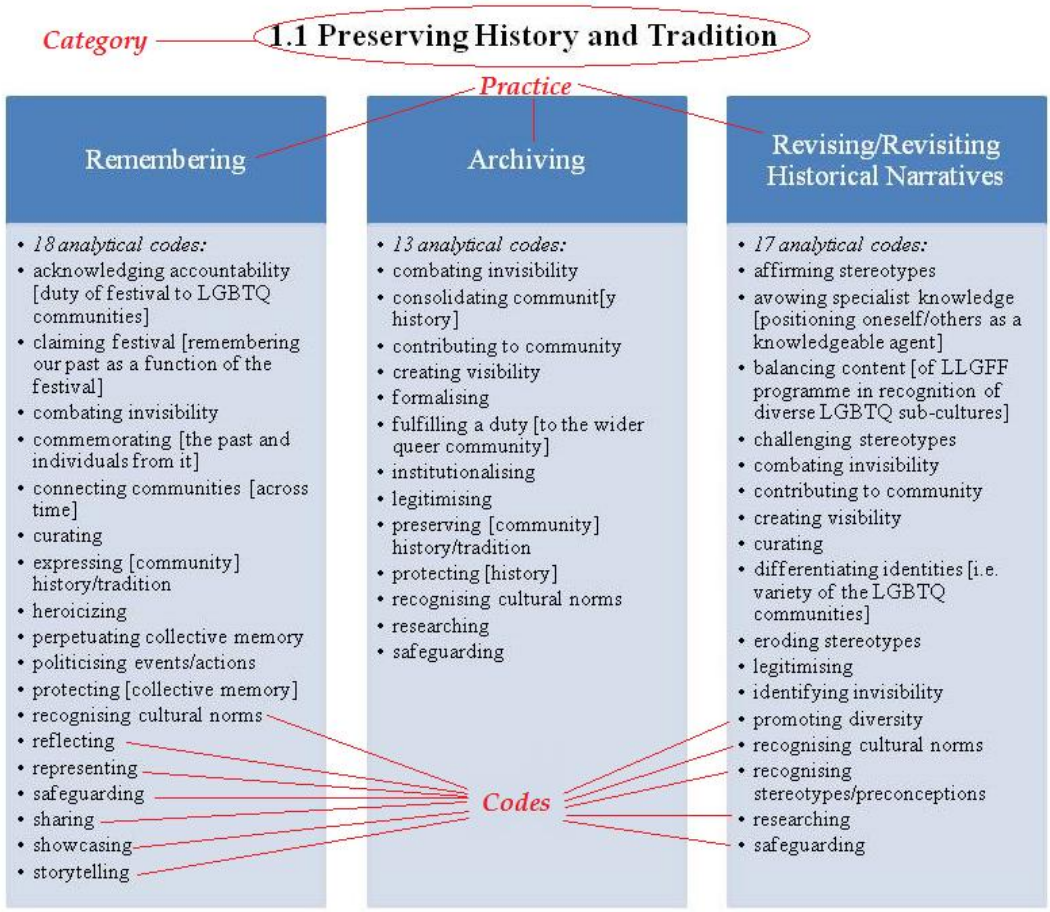
Figure 9: Analysis Map

In total, forty-eight practices were identified and grouped around sixteen categories of activity that those practices seek to achieve, which are in turn collected together within the five main finalised themes — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting* and *Negotiating Boundaries* — emerging from analysis and explored in the subsequent chapter, 'IV: Findings'. Evidently, the first four items of the original thematic groupings list share their 'titles' with four of the five finalised themes explored in this thesis. However, given the evolution of analysis, they are not conceptualised in quite the same manner. Notably, the six latter initial items have not disappeared from analysis. Rather, all ten of the original items were reconceptualised through further iterative coding and analysis. Thus, the latter six have mostly been re-imagined, refined and incorporated in some manner within the five finalised themes. Nevertheless, crucially, the particular assemblage of practices identified as significant (and those left out) and their weaving together into emergent themes necessarily reflects the subjective nature of research (see Cunliffe, 2011: 656) and the disciplinary concerns and lifeworld-rooted interpretative frames of the researcher (see Grbich, 2007: 8; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009: 1).

[67] Figure 66 in Appendix 2 provides a list of codes utilised in data analysis.

The manner in which coded data was ultimately structured is discussed in more detail in (and reflected in the structure of) the following chapter, 'IV: Findings'. The central body of 'Chapter IV' is divided into five sections that relate to the five themes identified, and further sub-divided according to the sixteen categories and forty-eight practices examined. Thus, structured data is not included en-masse in a singular section but, rather, is presented in diagrams and tables at appropriate junctures throughout the following chapter. For purposes of elucidation, annotated examples of these diagrams are included below. Within each of the sixteen 'Chapter IV' sub-divisions that corresponds to a category, the codes associated in the tracing of each practice relating to that category are indicated in a table. Thus, the following chapter contains sixteen such tables, an annotated example of which is given in the below Figure 10.

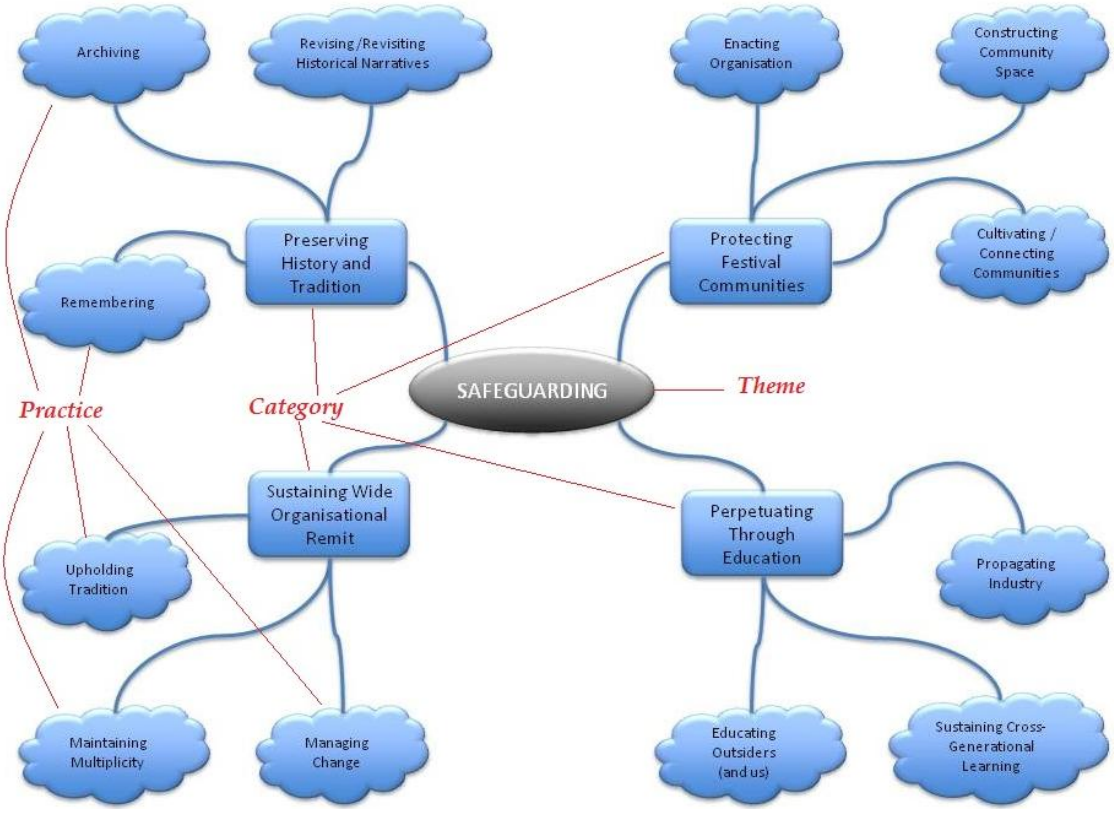
Figure 10: Example of table displaying codes



The relationship between practices, categories and themes is indicated graphically at the beginning of each of the five main sections of 'Chapter IV' (which correspond to the

five themes noted above). Thus, the following chapter contains five such diagrams, an annotated example of which is given in the below Figure 11.

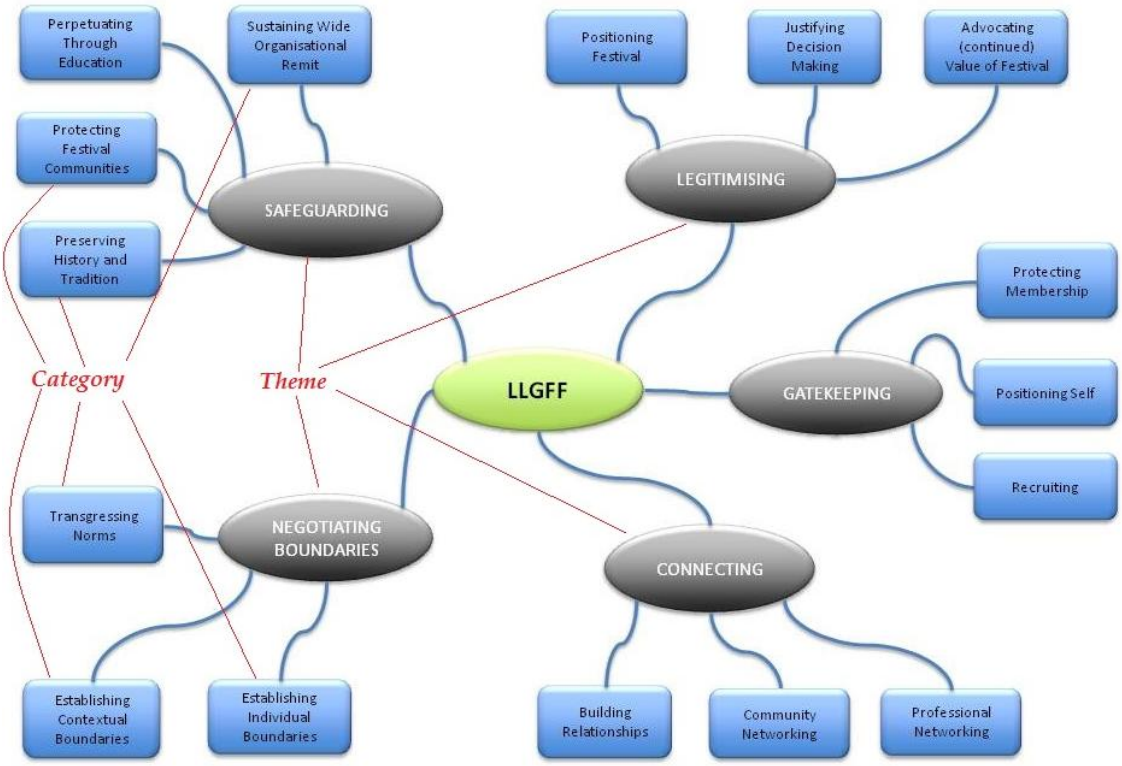
Figure 11: Example of theme-based diagrams, displaying different levels of structured data



For clarity, a top-level diagram indicating themes and categories is included at the beginning of 'Chapter IV' and an annotated version is offered in the overleaf Figure 12.

Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) and Nicolini (2009) both warn against the abstraction of practice from its relational totality. Practice is temporal, situated and embedded in the research context (Gomez & Bounty, 2011: 934) and irreducible to a collection of discrete entities. Sandberg and Tsoukas particularly warn that the abstraction of practice 'de-worlds' practices. Furthermore, they advise that this sort of approach 'tend[s] to reflect the logic of the researcher rather than the logic of the practice' (2011: 355). With this in mind, they propose that in utilising practice as a point

Figure 12: Example of top-level diagram



of departure the emphasis of research should be on what people actually do, the criterion that underlies a practice, and the resources required by that practice (346). Furthermore, they advocate 'zooming in' on how practice is accomplished and 'zooming out' to the relationships between and betwixt practices (see Nicolini, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011: 346). Thus, in moving beyond the identification of practices that follows from data analysis to the exploration, in the next chapter, of the five themes generated, the embedded and relational nature of practice emerges for, and becomes subject to, scholarly analysis rather than the closed identification of discrete de-contextualised practices. To this end, within the following chapter, articulations of practices are explained and presented in rich detail in order to preserve a flavour of their deeply contextualised nature. Within such articulations, it should be further noted that the researcher moves freely between the standpoints of different festival communities (i.e. differing enactors of practice), in order to: showcase as fully as possible the richness of the research context, avoid overtly privileging one perspective, and convey the relational nature of practice.

CHAPTER III SUMMARY

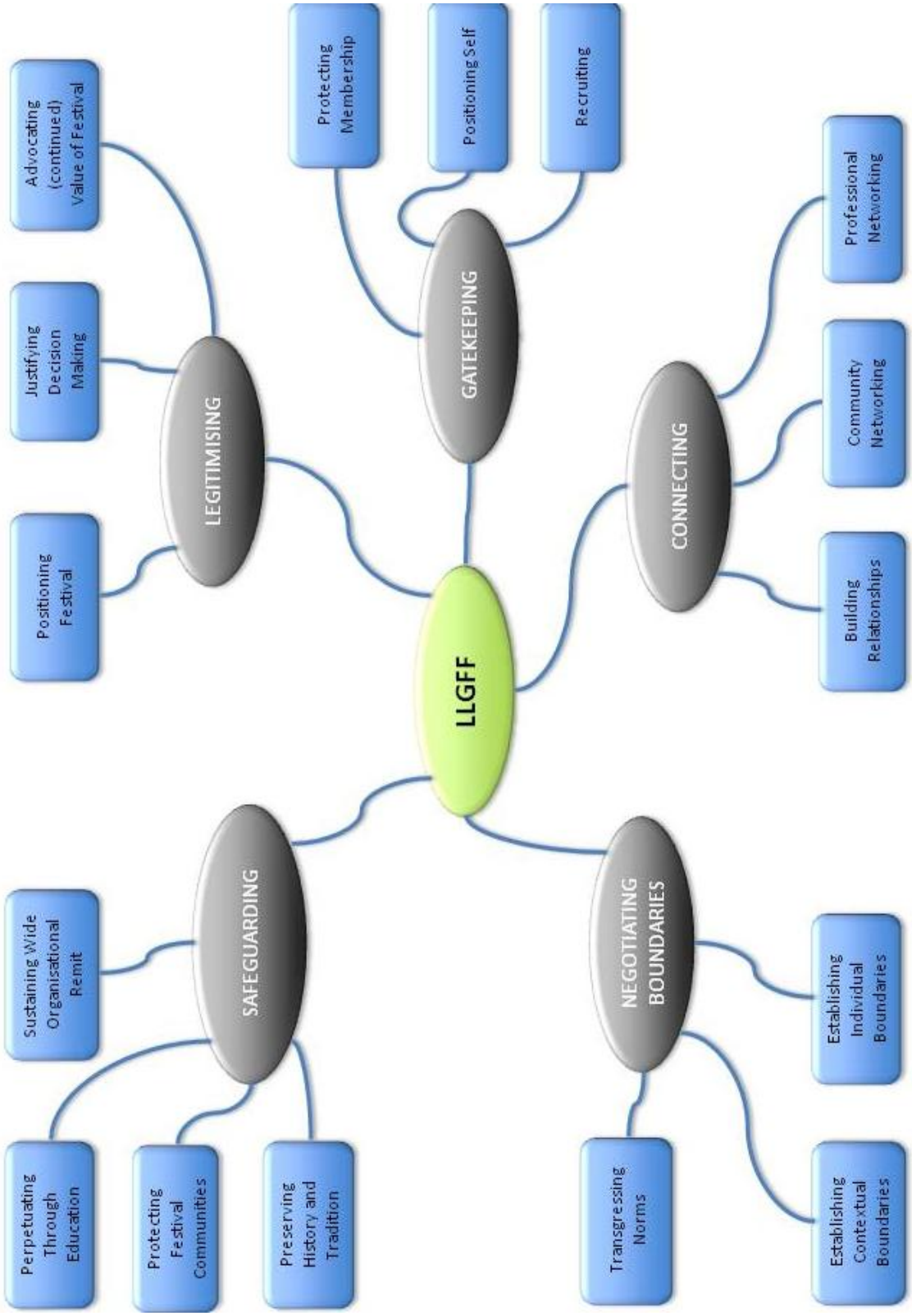
The aim of this chapter was to provide an overview of critical aspects of this research project, including: (1) the research context; (2) research aims; (3) metatheoretical assumptions, research strategy and the researcher as a situated 'knower'; and (4) the specific research design employed in this study. An inductive approach from within the qualitative research tradition was deemed complementary to the exploratory nature of this project and the initial aim of inductively generating an assemblage of practices. Paralleling many contemporary practice-based studies, an ensemble of data-collection techniques (interviews, observation and artefact analysis) were employed. Through inductive iterative coding and analysis of data, forty-eight practices, sixteen categories and five emergent themes were traced. These provide a framework for exploration in the following chapter of: emergent themes; interconnections (and tensions) between and across themes and practices; and, ultimately, the successful continued enactment of the festival itself.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is presented in five main sections that correspond to the five overarching thematic groupings traced: (1) *Safeguarding*, (2) *Legitimising*, (3) *Gatekeeping*, (4) *Connecting*, and (5) *Negotiating Boundaries*. As Figure 13 overleaf shows, these five sections are further broken down according to the sixteen categories of activity — and the forty-eight practices which comprise them — developed during analysis. The concluding sub-section of each of the five main sections presents a thematic-based summary. As previously discussed in Chapter II, practices can be considered as 'primitive and foundational [...] meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing activities' (Nicolini, 2011: 602). The aim of this study was not to attempt to 'capture' the totality of the festival, nor to reduce this complex phenomenon to a collection of discrete entities. Rather, the adoption of a practice-based approach sought to recognise the embedded nature of practices within the research context (Gomez & Bounty, 2011: 934) and to further serve as a launch pad from which to explore some of the performative, contingent and situated practices — and the relationships between them — that permeate the festival. Given that this approach 'brings relationships and connections to centre stage' and practices 'necessarily constitute complex nets with dense patterns of mutual references' (Nicolini, 2011: 603), linkages between categories and practices will be highlighted throughout this chapter. Such linkages are indicated through the use of italicised font in prose (i.e. *example*) or italicised references inside square brackets (i.e. *[example]* in the case of a practice or *[2.1 Example]* in the case of a category or theme). Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that in examining the organising practices of the LLGFF and interrelated communities the analytical focus of this chapter will, in turn, shift between different but interconnected aspects of this festival world in order to better reflect the richness and interwoven nature of this research context. Nevertheless, the organising practices of the LLGFF and its central community remain the primary focus of this thesis. The subsequent chapter, 'V: Discussion and Conclusions', integrates these findings and also considers theoretical and practical insights generated both by engagement with each theme and also through consideration of the festival as a whole.

Figure 13: Analysis Clusters



1: SAFEGUARDING: *PRESERVING, PROTECTING AND PERPETUATING COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATION*

"It's a real audience-facing festival and I think its biggest role [...] is in bringing in the queer communities from around London [...] together to watch films, to network, to meet each other, and to be a cultural 'happening'... because everyone really comes out. [...] It brings everybody together!"

(Participant 6)

"This eclectic mixture of narrative, experimental and documentary remains the festival's hallmark to this day. Looking back across its various editions, one is struck by the varied range of creativity on show, the gradual waning of the trope of the suicidal lonely queen, the increasing confidence of the communities reflected on screen and the increase in that once rarest of films, the lesbian narrative feature."

(Robinson, 2012)

"I think we've got slicker. I think the background organisation of it [LLGFF] just improves. I mean there is so much, it's interesting what goes into Opening Night, what goes into getting this programme out to all the places it goes to, it's a very well-oiled machine now. And they've got the right people in the right places to do it. So that's been nice to see that change in the role. And I can say, I've been involved with it over a number of years not just as a programmer, there's a professionalism and almost maturity to it. Which, is not to say that we've lost our sense of humour or our... 'naughtiness' ... but it's a much more well put together affair now. And I think it benefits from that. We invest in a proper clip reel, we have a proper press launch, which we never used to have, we have a proper press and media strategy. I mean this year, Brian has been everywhere! On the radio! On the news! In the newspapers! It's been fantastic!"

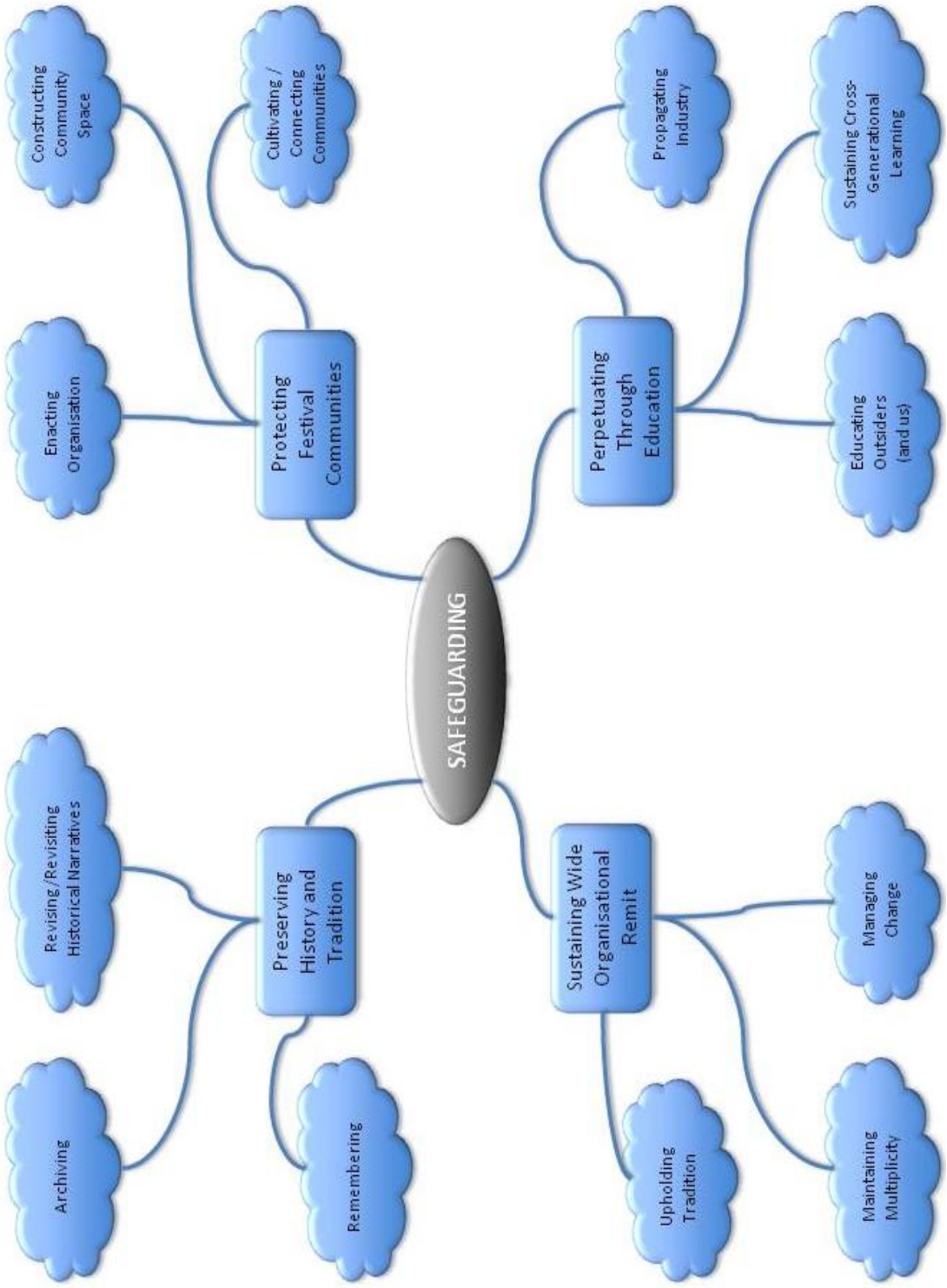
(Participant 2)

"It's important and inspiring that the British Film establishment has such a firm commitment to queer film! And queer creativity in the broader sense. It's really important. [...] Queer culture is part of, is becoming part of the mainstream."

(Participant 13)

The epigraphs on the previous page evoke: a strong sense of festival lineage and its long-term role for queer culture; a deep sensitivity to links between past and present; the importance of the continued enactment of the festival; and its continuing capacity to nurture queer culture and communities. Accordingly, the first theme to be examined in this chapter is 'Safeguarding'. This thematic grouping comprises four component categories, which will be presented in the following four corresponding sub-sections: (1.1) Preserving History and Tradition; (1.2) Protecting Festival Communities; (1.3) Perpetuating through Education; and (1.4) Sustaining Wide Organisational Remit. As illuminated in Figure 14 overleaf, these categories, in turn, comprise twelve practices, which will be discussed in relation to relevant data extracts. Finally, a summary section (1.5) will elaborate upon the theme of 'Safeguarding'. Relevant theoretical and practical insights emerging from all five themes will be discussed in the following chapter, 'V: Discussion and Conclusions'.

Figure 14: Safeguarding Theme



1.1 - PRESERVING HISTORY AND TRADITION

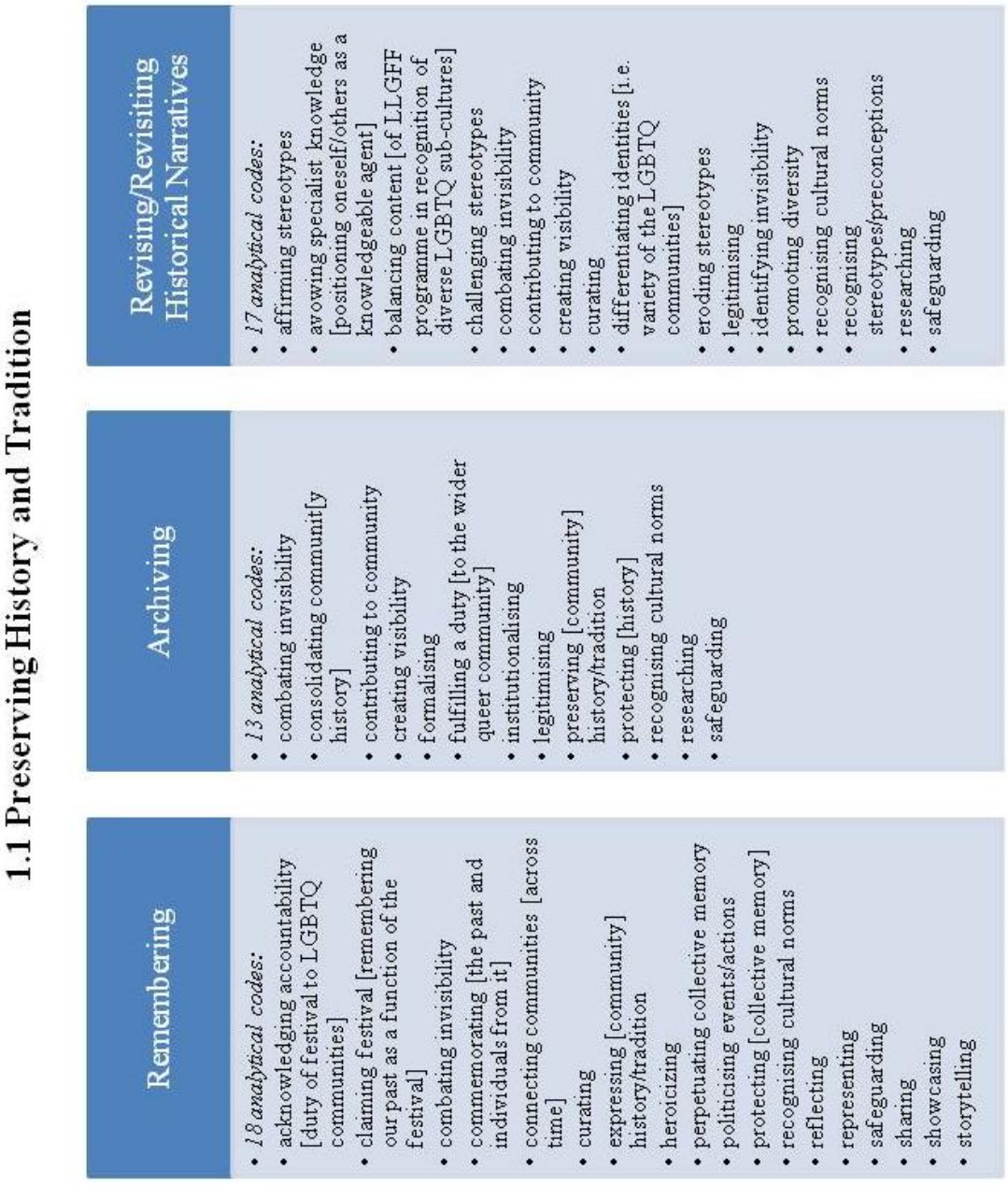
This category comprises three practices — *remembering*, *archiving* and *revising/revisiting historical narratives* — discussed below, which together serve to preserve the history and traditions of the LLGFF, LGBTQ communities and sub-cultures, and important individuals and trends of LGBTQ cinema. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 15 overleaf.

REMEMBERING:
COMMEMORATING THE PAST AND CONSOLIDATING COMMUNITY MEMORY

The importance placed upon remembering our past and engaging with queer[68] histories reverberates throughout the interview material. In fact, this is manifest, symbolically, during the festival in the annual inclusion of the 'archive strand' of film programming, which highlights historical events of shared significance, heroicizing LGBTQ persons, cultures and movements. The consolidation of our collective cultural memory through the commemoration of our 'shared' past is also linked to the showcasing of 'people that might be forgotten'. As a programmer illustrates below:

[68] Throughout this chapter the terms 'LGB', 'LGBT', 'LGBTQ' and 'queer' will be purposively used in different contexts to convey slightly different meanings, which should be apparent to the reader but are clarified where necessary. Queer should not be simply understood as an 'umbrella term' or homogeneous label for minority sexuality/gender identities (although, some participants utilise the term in this manner). Rather, queer is a term without a fixed referent. It can be used to convey a wider politicised project of the subaltern against assimilation, which instead seeks to access (and legitimise) our neglected histories/cultures/voices and problematise the normative categorisations of sexuality and gender. It is pertinent to note here that the term 'queer' is used differentially by LGBTQ individuals/communities, queer (political) activists and those scholars utilising or exploring aspects of the 'queering' post-structuralist critical lens of queer theory (the scope of which extends beyond concerns with the prevailing conceptual dyads that underpin the supposed nexus of sex/gender/sexuality to queering or problematising prevailing categories of knowledge in diverse fields). It should be noted that, due to its historical (and ongoing) usage by some as a term of derision, the term 'queer', for some, is instead charged with negative connotations. For a comprehensive overview of the complex lineage of queer theory, see Hall (2003), Jagoste (1996), Seidman (1996) or Sullivan (2003). For an interesting discussion of the application of queer theory in management studies, see Parker (2001).

Figure 15: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Preserving History and Tradition'



> *We have this capability of* ***putting queer history in context***[69] *as well, like we do with the archive and experimental strands...* ***we showcase people that might be forgotten****,* ***we've got Peter de Rome's work - who was a filmmaker throughout the 70s - showing,*** *all the films in the archive and* ***we do retrospectives****, which I'm not sure lots of other film festivals do.* ***I think that's what makes it, I think that's what is so important, is the events about our queer lives and community and history*** *which play alongside the [contemporary] films. They just give this well-rounded, it's why this festival is such a joy to work on. […] I wonder if I would be as* ***professionally satisfied*** *working on a film festival that only wanted me to do current programming,* ***that didn't want me to think back and present something from our past.***
>
> (Participant 2)

In a similar vein, for LGBTQ communities the commemoration of the past is inextricably linked to the experiences of those individuals who lived during a (past) time of secrecy and invisibility and also of political activism and sacrifice. In remembering these (latter) individuals — and, indeed, heroicizing their actions — there is a sense of the current LGBTQ communities' debt to previous generations, as illustrated in the following extract: '**we really need to keep,** we can never take it for granted that… our rights and our well-being are going to be looked after. Because **we have fought for this**, **people have died**!' (Participant 9).

Nevertheless, serious, sober and playful dimensions of the perpetuation of the collective memory of earlier generations coexist at the festival, reflecting the multifaceted nature of collective memory. Early cinema predominately utilised commonly understood codes and signs to signify non-normative sexuality and gender expression, on occasion openly depicting a LGBTQ character. Following the introduction of the 1930 'Motion Picture Production Code' in Hollywood, popularly known as the Hays Code, the explicit depiction of various vices including 'sexual perversion' was prohibited.[70] Instead, queer cultural norms, subtle stereotypes and linguistic devices were utilised to convey LGBTQ characters or tendencies. Those habituated and socialised to such norms, codes and devices were able to view a film in a

[69] Bold-typeface is utilised in data extracts throughout this chapter for emphasis. Underline emphases are also used, where appropriate, to draw further attention to specific passages/words in the text.
[70] See *Out at the Movies: A History of Gay Cinema* (Davies, 2008: 19-23), *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (Russo, 1987) and *Now You See It: Historical Studies in Gay and Lesbian Film* (Dyer, 1990).

different light to those who remained unenlightened.[71] Today, in remembering this era by showcasing contemporaneous film material, disparate LGBTQ communities can undergo a collective enculturation to our shared historical narrative and traditions, consolidating and transmitting our collective memory to future generations *[connecting communities]*. As this example shows:

> *Maybe I'm really old-fashioned but I think* ***queer audiences, they are very used to reading things in double.*** *[...]* ***I think people look for that*** *still now. Well, I mean I know 'before' that was like a normal thing... but now* ***I think still people enjoy that double-meaning****. […] I like old kind of queer films. […] I do love watching films kind of... pre-legalisation. I think* ***there's something really wonderful about reading the codes and signs****.*
>
> (Participant 12)

In following these 'coded queer characters all the way through from coded references to negative inferences to explicit mentions' (Field-diary, *Queen Christina* introduction [Archive Strand]), audiences actively 'remember' the past experiences that form a tributary aspect of their collective history. In reflecting upon our shared past through historical cinema, the festival showcases the pioneers of queer cinema who laid the foundations for young queer filmmakers today. Notably, the contribution of the LLGFF itself — both to the preservation of LGBTQ history and as a carrier of queer culture — is not forgotten or overlooked. Its active place in queer cinematic and cultural history is periodically celebrated through special events (such as the '25th Anniversary Lecture' in 2011) or through clip shows, as demonstrated in the following extract: 'when it was the twentieth festival, he asked me to present **a look back over twenty years of queer cinema <u>and</u> twenty years of the festival** in a clip show, which I loved doing' (Participant 2). The activities of this practice, in this context, thus act as a significant anchor, reinforcing the significance of the relationship between the festival and the LGBTQ community (but, perhaps, limited to or strongest during festival anniversaries).

[71] Furthermore, following from Mulvey's theorisation of the 'male gaze' (1975), scholars exploring theories of queer spectatorship advocate that it is possible to deconstruct the normative discourses within a filmic text and (re)construct moments of narrative disruption in order to destabilise heteronormativity (Sullivan, 2003: 191).

A significant aspect of the collective cultural memory of a disparate LGBTQ population is, arguably, anchored in a shared historical consciousness, grounded in discrete concrete events and experiences such as the Stonewall Riots of 1969 or the repeal of Section 28 in 2003 (in England and Wales). Unlike most other minority communities, understandings of our collective roots are generally not passed on through the generations in a familial space of transmission. Instead, cross-generational transmission of this shared historical consciousness must be fostered through direct and indirect engagement with elders within the LGBTQ community and with cultural artefacts from or examining our past. Thus, our cultural heritage may be assimilated, consolidated and fractured through film (and, indeed, festivals), which present a vignette of the legal, political, organisational, and social climate negotiated by our forbearers at various points through time. When woven into the wider fabric of contemporaneous events, the archive of queer cinema or films examining LGBTQ themes and lives (re-)presents illustrative meaningful examples that serve to preserve our collective history and traditions.

The mutual and interpenetrating consolidation of community, history and, crucially, our collective cultural memory is a key feature and outcome of this practice of *remembering*. Through the commemoration of historical events of shared significance, heroicizing of LGBTQ persons and movements, and the expression of community history through the medium of film, *remembering* perpetuates collective memory and serves as the locus for the (re)production of queer social relations. Critically, through the cumulative repeated enactment of this crucial role (as a mediator and connection point of queer collective memory and cultures), the festival is itself endowed with continued meaning that thus consolidates and safeguards its place in the queer cultural canon *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival]*. This, in turn, acts to preserve and cement the history and traditions of the festival itself. In addition to this central meaning-making role, the practice of *remembering* is identity-forming at the level of the individual, the collective community and, significantly, the festival. The above examples also highlight the blurring of contextual boundaries of the festival *[5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*, which set the ever-shifting parameters for the central aims and purported 'purposes' of the festival *[contesting ownership; redefining scope]*. This is illuminated in the first example where, crucially, the participant

(notably, a programmer) places the emphasis upon 'queer lives and community and history' rather than the programme of contemporary features and shorts when articulating what is important about the festival. The commemoration of the past is also linked here to educating *[1.3 Perpetuating Through Education]* and to the showcasing of 'people that might be forgotten', combating the general and creeping invisibility of those LGBTQ individuals outwith dominant historical narratives *[revising/revisiting historical narratives]* and perhaps also neglected by the canon of queer historical considerations *[educating outsiders (and us)]*.

ARCHIVING:
FESTIVAL AND COMMUNITY

In the absence of a dedicated national museum space or the long-standing security of a specialist national archive,[72] the desire to secure and protect (and re-capture the lost richness of) diverse community histories pervades many aspects of the festival. In fact, the BFI has a permanent LGBTQ-related collection 'Beautiful Things' within their larger national film archive, which is publically accessible via the in-house *Mediatheque* facility. During the festival the 'Beautiful Things' collection (and the wider archive) was showcased through a dedicated free event, which aimed to educate festival attendees about the contents and aims of the collection and encourage their future engagement. However, when the presenter inquired as to how many audience members had previously used the *Mediatheque* it was apparent that the majority of attendees were already familiar with the facility. Nevertheless, the BFI's indispensible role in re-capturing rich historical LGBTQ material and securing its place in a formal institutionalised historical record was heroicized at this event and beyond *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries*; *heroicizing/aggrandising festival]*. As this field-diary extract illustrates:

> *X highlights his own interest in archive cinema and the **crucial role the BFI play** in both **protecting** and also **re-discovering** these fascinating and **precious***

[72] Various small LGBTQ archives do exist within different institutions, notably 'The Lesbian Archive' (founded in 1984) held at Glasgow Women's Library (relocated from London in 1995 following funding cuts).

> ***images from our past**. […] The 'Beautiful Things' collection features some of the best of contemporary queer cinema but also **attempts to recapture archived images of coded queer characters and depictions of LGBT individuals/life**. In expanding the collection by exploring the national archive, **seeking out these images and depictions**, they aren't just looking for positive ones: "it would be a very small collection". We "**need to reclaim the stereotypes from our past**" as they "**feed into**" **our identity in the current day**.*
>
> (Field-diary notes, 'The BFI *Mediatheque* Event' – citing Participant 1)

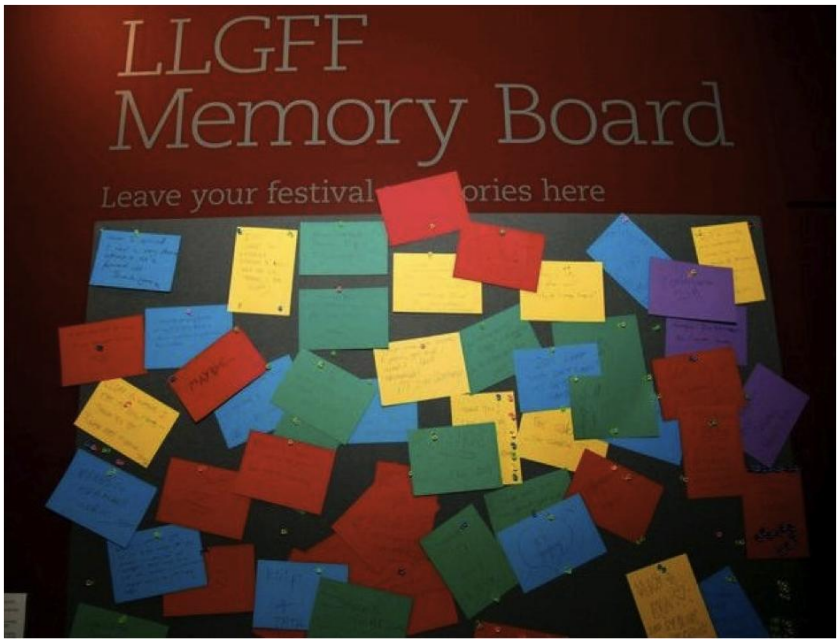
The above example also highlights a necessary engagement with our archived past, which is conceptualised here as identity-shaping. A sense of the educational value of film permeated the interview material, notably relating to the ability of archive material to bring to light the historical roots of facets of (contemporary and historical) LGBTQ cultures (including stereotypes) and identities *[1.3 Perpetuating Through Education]*. The rediscovery of these roots through early material is highlighted below:

> *Y shows some early clips to illustrate what he means by **recapturing our hidden 'pre-history'**. Most **memorable for me** was the clip from 'Battling Bruisers: Some Boxing Buffoonery'*[73] *[...]. X intersects here with an **anecdote** about **discovering this clip in the BFI archive** and how delighted he was but also **shocked that no-one had noticed the absurdly overtly coded queer characters**. Y: "a lot of these have been **shown once and never seen again. That is why we have to look after them**".*
>
> (Field-diary notes, 'The BFI *Mediatheque* Event' - citing Participant 1)

The archiving of LGBTQ material and engagement with the archive is dynamic and not limited to historic material. In fact, an attempt is made by the organisers of the festival to capture and subsequently preserve artefacts relating to the LLGFF itself, as the photograph depicted in the overleaf Figure 16 captures.

[73] (Dir: Adrian Brunel; UK, 1925).

Figure 16: Field-diary excerpt



In a similar vein, the festival employs an official photographer to document the 'atmosphere' around the building during the festival, particularly at free events and parties. Many of the introductions to films by the programmers and the Q&A sessions with film representatives are also digitally recorded. These photographs and a selection of the AV recordings are shared with a wider populace with an interest in (queer) cinema through the LLGFF website, the 'BFI Live' stream (on the BFI website) and LLGFF/BFI social-media accounts such as Twitter and Facebook. This archive of festival-related material is often showcased during 'anniversary festivals'. For instance, the 25th LLGFF in 2011 featured a 'history of the festival' exhibition and also a lecture by the Senior Programmer regarding the intertwined history of the queer cinema and the festival itself.

Archiving is understood here as the active protection of community (historical) material, most notably filmic artefacts in this case. The institutionalisation, documentation and consolidation of such artefacts augments the formal historical record of LGBTQ communities. The (re)discovery of historic material with queer themes, motifs or characters thus allows us to re-assess existing narratives of queer cultural history *[revising/revisiting historical narratives]*. Indeed, tracing back queer cultural norms, codes, signs and stereotypes in archive material can provide a contributory narrative to our collective LGBTQ history and traditions. Given this fundamental role,

consolidating historical artefacts in order to preserve (and recapture) history and tradition is paramount as it is in part through the archive that we 'remember' our past *[remembering]*. Similarly, the potential for contemporary cinema to engage with historical LGBTQ events, important figures or cultural movements and thus add to the existing archive adds a contributory layer to the festival itself (for instance, the documentary *Vito*[74] tells the story of activist & film historian Vito Russo [1946-1990]).

This formalisation of both new and re-discovered material into the queer cultural canon thus potentially augments the 'remembering' of LGBTQ histories and traditions. However, the crafting of a collective LGBTQ cultural narrative is not confined to the exploration of historical material. The festival itself operates as the temporal and spatial nexus of a diverse assortment of individuals, activities and practices. Each iteration of the festival — the programme, events, films selected, copy, press releases, photographs and memories produced — serves as both a robust bridge between past and present and a crystallised reference point through which to explore LGBTQ culture, sub-cultures and the wider queer-filmmaking community. Furthermore, the activities of this practice are of critical importance in securing and preserving a vibrant record of the festival — its communities, activities, events and atmosphere — that, over time, contributes to organisational memory and acts to cement aspects of the festivals enactment in future iterations.

REVISING/REVISITING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

The revision of heteronormative or heterocentric accounts of cultural history and sub-cultures facilitates consideration of an often invisible or marginalised distinctly LGBTQ cultural heritage. Within the data, this revising/revisiting practice was most evidently reflected through the programming choices of programmers and the concerns of queer filmmakers. The response below is particularly illustrative; given in answer to an interview introductory question ('What's your favourite film in the festival this year?'):

[74] (Dir: Schwarz; USA, 2011).

Well, I love 'Jobriath A.D.'[75] *because it's a really interesting subject and it kind of* ***encapsulates the thirst for queer cultural history that is in danger of being invisible***. ***Jobriath is not a major cultural figure but he was the first openly gay rock star*** *and has been very influential on a generation.* ***I feel that it's really important for gay men and lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people of all ages to have the evidence of their history*** *and...* ***that's mostly kept from them****. And… the fact that a lot of people who were important* ***cultural creators*** *died in the AIDS epidemic means there is even more* ***danger of them being just airbrushed out of the historical record****.*

(Participant 1)

Furthermore, for the disparate LGBTQ population this issue of invisibility is also apparent. Within dominant (problematically homogenised) accounts of the cultural history of 'the gay community', queer sub-cultures, ideological movements, minority ethnicities and, arguably most notably, transgendered and intersex identities remain largely marginalised. The resulting invisibility of certain elements of queer communities is highlighted in the below field-diary excerpt from the Q&A session of a film examining queer urban life intermixed with black street culture of East London:

*Director****:*** *You don't hear or see the variety of London in film.* ***I wanted to show that flavour, a slice of queer London life****…* ***the culture and sub-cultures of black queer life****.[...] I don't understand representations in film of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans as segregated [from each other].* ***It's not my world… I wanted to create another world, to match my own****.*

(Field-diary, *Stud Life* Q&A Session)

On the other hand, revisiting — as opposed to revising — normative accounts of cultural history with a contemporary queer gaze provides opportunities to re-imagine those accounts through a sub-cultural glaze/varnish *[(re)defining scope]*. This recasting, usually involving parody and camp, blurs the divisions between 'queer cinema' and the mainstream and is exemplified in the success of such events/films at many LLGFF iterations (e.g. 'Sing Along Sound of Music' [Robinson, 2011]). This playful recasting through a queer gaze is demonstrated in the excerpt below:

I put together a ***women in sports programme*** *looking at homophobia in sport and I programmed* ***lots of films about... queerness in sport*** *but it might not have been overtly,* ***you might not have obviously thought about those films in a queer context****. I also*

[75] (Dir: Turner; USA, 2011).

programmed some Leni Riefenstahl films [...] alongside 'St Trinians' and 'Pumping Iron' and 'Personal Best'[76] *[…] and I called the programme "Gymslips".*

(Participant 12)

In this example, a tongue-in-cheek camp recasting of the gratuitous shots of an oiled Arnold Schwarzenegger's 1975 bid for the title of 'Mr. Universe' in *Pumping Iron* is palatable to a wide LGBTQ audience. However, there is no clear demarcation or universally shared understanding of the acceptable parameters to such practice. The participant went on to explain an unexpected result of her choice to revisit the Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, elaborated in the below extract:

She [Riefenstahl] was basically Hitler's filmmaker. ***She was a brilliant filmmaker but she was a Nazi filmmaker*** *and she made a lot of films for Hitler's propaganda machine. And two of her most famous films were about the Olympic Games.*[77] *[…]* ***The BFI have those prints and they are very very rarely screened****. She basically invented... a lot of aspects of documentary filmmaking […] She was an amazing filmmaker but people have major problems with her because she was a Nazi filmmaker. [...]I got [laughs] this woman,* ***this very famous film critic called B. Ruby Rich, she wrote an article in the Guardian called 'Queer Eye for the Nazi Guy'***[78] ****attacking us*!***

(Participant 12)

The practice of *revising/revisiting historical narratives* is understood here as dynamic engagement with the predominant historical and cultural narratives understood by the wider public. Outwith attempts to showcase 'the best in contemporary queer cinema', there is an evident desire on the part of the programmers and filmmakers to quench a thirst for queer cultural history and redress the invisibility and marginalisation of queer cultures *[5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*. In a similar vein, the festival itself is a microcosm of a wider problem facing queer carriers of culture: recognising the diversity and differentiated experiences of LGBTQ individuals, rather than a homogeneous 'gay community' *[recognising stakeholders; representing communities]*. Participants were united in their acknowledgement of this challenge and

[76] (Dir: Launder; UK, 1954), (Dir: Butler & Fiore; USA, 1977) and (Dir: Towne; USA, 1982), respectively.
[77] *Olympia 1: Festival of the Nations* and *Olympia II: Festival of Beauty* (Dir: Riefenstahl; Germany, 1938).
[78] 'A queer eye for Nazi guys: Why is the London Lesbian and Gay film festival celebrating the works of a Nazi filmmaker?' (Rich, 2004). Rich is a Professor of Film and Visual Media and a former member of the Sundance selection committee.

many displayed motivation to break down normative, universalising and overly-simplified accounts of our cultural history. In recognition of this myriad variety, deliberate attempts are made to include diverse films — with marginalised subjects, characters and narratives — in the festival programme and to offer events specifically catering to these groups *[maintaining multiplicity]*. Furthermore, material is provided to the audience which allows them to re-frame in an empowering queer light — and subsequently augment — their understanding of this shared cultural narrative. In revising and revisiting dominant historical narratives, our community history and traditions can be better appreciated and preserved in their rich diversity and complexity.

The three practices articulated above provide frames for understanding some of the mechanisms by which the history and traditions of the LLGFF and LGBTQ communities can be preserved, illuminating community meaning-making through social practice. Far from the cohesiveness that the moniker 'the gay community' may suggest, our fundamentally disparate population possesses fractured narratives of community history and cultural memory. However, these practices collectively safeguard — by securing and enhancing the archive — a history and tradition that is rich in texture and which, through its continuous consolidation, becomes less marginalised and more visible. Through these practices, the festival weaves together multiple fragments into a wider fabric that lends itself to the protection and cross-generational transmission *[sustaining cross-generational learning]* of our collective cultural memory, and so has consequences for identity-formation and negotiation as well as meaning-making (for both LGBTQ communities and, indeed, the LLGFF itself). Furthermore, as will be further explored throughout this chapter, through the activities of practices such as these the festival bolsters and safeguards its own organisational history and memory, as well as its value, legitimacy and significance to the crucial stakeholder of LGBTQ communities, both of which thus act to circumvent its potential transience.

1.2 - PROTECTING FESTIVAL COMMUNITIES

This category comprises three practices — *enacting organisation*, *constructing community space* and *cultivating communities* — discussed below, which serve to protect those communities that permeate and constitute the festival: queer cinephiles and those interested in queer culture; wider LGBTQ communities and sub-cultures; queer filmmakers; and those involved in the broader queer-cinema industry.[79] The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 17 overleaf.

ENACTING ORGANISATION

A vital degree of temporal continuity — with regards to the concepts, ethos and ideals employed during each iteration of the festival — is ensured, as previously discussed for instance, through a primary anchoring/cementing mechanism: a connection and engagement with festival history *[1.1 Preserving History and Tradition]*. However, despite this continuity and a partial workforce derived from the permanent staff of the BFI (e.g. Press Office, projectionists etc.), the festival is reliant upon a number of unpaid volunteers and short-term paid contracted staff (e.g. programmers, Industry Liaison Officer). Nevertheless, the LLGFF operates within and through a number of enduring organisational structures *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries]* that act to 'cement' the festival organisation, and interviewees displayed an intrinsic understanding of the elements, processes and benchmarks which underlie the festival from year to year *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*. The analogy highlighted below encapsulates a commitment to attain these benchmarks, regardless of experience:

> *The Women's Institute is a fantastic organisation that does lots of things with people who… may not have specific skills in organising things but they can find halls and put on speakers [...]* ***that tradition of self-help organisation*** *is something that we as programmers...* ***we're not trained in*** *film-festival programming****, we don't have degrees in*** *film curation. So* ***in a sense we've***

[79] The protection of festival organising/enacting communities is primarily discussed in '3: Gatekeeping'.

Figure 17: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Protecting Festival Communities'

> ***made it up as we've gone along**... but **we have a very professional structure to operate within**.*
>
> (Participant 1)

A further cementing mechanism that underpins the permanence of the festival is the long-term engagement of many staff and volunteers (beyond just a few iterations of the festival). The below example, articulated by an individual involved for more than two decades, highlights how this effects the cohesive nature of the programming team: 'we've all been **working together for at least three or four years** now so we have a **sense of each other's tastes and strengths** and, I think, are quite respectful of each other' (Participant 1). Similarly, another individual involved for almost two decades in a variety of capacities notes: 'I feel like we would defend each other [...], we would look out for each other [...], I think in that sense we're a bit like a nice little gang now' (Participant 3). Moreover, the spatial continuity of the festival is buttressed through its annual iteration at the same location and this cementing mechanism is further (indirectly) reinforced through the BFI Southbank's monthly strand of LGBT cinema, 'Out at the Pictures', programmed, in fact, by a LLGFF programmer.

Furthermore, the festival plays an active organising and protective role within the wider queer-film industry. In particular, industry-networking events forge links between film-community members and further bolster existing relationships *[4.1 Professional Networking]*. Similarly, as the below example highlights, the festival connects the industry with the queer communities who make up their audiences *[connecting communities]*:

> *You hope that by nurturing them [filmmakers], they are going to then be allowed to make that bigger step and hopefully continue to tell queer stories along the way. [...] I think **without specific festivals for all that [queer] filmmaking community, it would just be lost. It would be much more difficult for them, to make the films and <u>get them seen</u>.***
>
> (Participant 2)

The annual iteration of this prestigious festival also contributes to the organisation of the wider LGBTQ-film network *[benchmarking/differentiating festival; festivals networking]*:

> *There's the **outlet**, the **venue**... There's the festival for queer filmmakers to experiment and **show their film**. ... Now there is an **amazing network of queer film festivals** around the world, whereas ten years ago... Now there's so many that there is a kind of **'tier' of film festivals**.*
>
> (Participant 12)

The annual iteration of the LLGFF could be described in terms of a succession of film screenings and industry, community or film-related events. However, such a narrow interpretation of the LLGFF — as a series of discrete events or singular iterations — belies the complex wider organisation of the festival and its permanence, as opposed to transience, in both space and time. Given the complex composition of the LLGFF 'workforce' and the reliance upon unpaid or short-term/part-time contracts, it would be reasonable to expect a propensity towards the fractured enactment of each iteration as a separate event. However, the continued and meaningful engagement of many festival staff/volunteers lends a permanence and continuity, thus safeguarding an enduring 'festival' across iterations *[5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*. In this way, the pitfalls of reliance upon an ad hoc and perhaps amateur or non-specialist team are somewhat countered by this continuity and the resulting intrinsic understanding of enduring standards and ideals.

In enacting organisation, an enduring sense of 'festival' (identity) is (re-)cemented and prevails across iterations. This permanence protects not only these functions but also the communities based around the running of the festival itself (i.e. the 'festival-organising', 'festival-enacting' and 'queer-film-industry' communities). Similarly, in giving structure to the inter-relations between queer-filmmaking and LGBTQ communities, the festival serves a purpose in organising and thus protecting the queer-film industry itself, contributing to safeguarding its continued success. Thus, not only does the LLGFF play a key role in *preserving [community] history and tradition[s]* but also, as will be further argued, in representing, cultivating, connecting and legitimising LGBTQ communities *[4.2 Community Networking; 5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*.

CONSTRUCTING COMMUNITY SPACE:
LGBTQ AND QUEER-FILM INDUSTRY 'SITES' WITHIN THE LLGFF

As previously discussed, the LGBTQ 'community' is in fact disparate and dispersed and individuals are ostensibly linked only by non-normative sexuality/gender identification (see sub-section 2.3 of Chapter II). LGBT bars and clubs do offer points of connection and congregation for this fractured community but, of course, 'the scene' does not hold appeal for all.[80] The LLGFF can offer an alternative point of connection *[4.2 Community Networking]*, as this example highlights: 'I think it's very **empowering** for anyone who has **only seen the gay community as a place where you get drunk and have sex**... it's really nice to be in an environment where you can **talk to people**' (Participant 1).

Throughout the interview material, articulation of the transformation of the BFI into a community space is almost universal, a sense shared by the researcher and evident throughout the field-diary. The physical site is referred to as a 'queer cultural-centre' (Participant 1) and several participants highlighted a sense of the community having commandeered the space *[contesting ownership]*, for instance: 'we kind of **own** the Southbank' (Participant 9). Furthermore, one participant drew a positive comparison with a main scene site in London, Soho:

> *I think what is significant about it being here [Southbank] is **not that we take it away from the community** [Soho]. **We make the community**. For the week and a half [...] the community come down here and **it feels as buzz-y and vibrant and safe as Soho**.*
>
> (Participant 2)

Another participant alluded to the festival as a point of connection for disparate LGBTQ communities *[connecting communities]*:

> ***Gay men and gay women and trans people all coming together** and having a good time together and being in the building. There is a really palpable sense that **we've taken over a space. And, this is our space**! Which doesn't happen*

[80] For instance, LGBTQ 'personal ads' sometimes specify 'non-scene'.

with any other event. I feel, to me, this is more interesting than Pride.

(Participant 4)

Whilst some participants indicated the historical association of the festival with activism and politics *[politicising; contesting ownership]*, others highlighted the lineage of attempts to draw other elements of the LGBTQ community into this queer cultural space *[reaching out]*:

> *We were really adamant that the festival should have some sort of outreach. I'm not talking about the educational outreach that the festival runs, we're talking about* ***queer cultural outreach****. We made a lot of* ***contacts with all the clubs*** *in London, a lot of the gay clubs, the dyke bars [...]. We did a lot of* ***collaborations*** *with them.* ***We wanted to bring those audiences into the festival*** *because [...] it was a little bit... stuffy. It was kind of 'the BFI' and we wanted to shake it up a bit.*

(Participant 12)

In a similar vein, the festival also offers a physical space of connection for the queer-filmmaking community. As will be further discussed in 4.1, this is most obviously manifest in the provision of the Delegate Centre as 'a space' that filmmakers and the industry-elite 'can all gravitate to' (Participant 8).

It can be seen that the LLGFF provides an invaluable community space, for both LGBTQ and queer-filmmaking communities. Furthermore, the diversity of events/films that constitute the festival programme, coupled with outreach activity via marketing and liaising with community organisations, serves as an effective magnet to bring together disparate elements of the community (e.g. scene/non-scene, cinephile/non-cinephile). Similarly, in the absence of a dedicated 'site', the LLGFF operates as a space serving the queer-film industry. This is particularly epitomised in the Delegate Centre however, as will be further discussed, it is pertinent to note that this space is disconnected from the wider LLGFF-site, segregating industry communities from wider LGBTQ communities *[3.Gatekeeping]*.[81] The construction of these spaces serves to fortify these

[81] For instance, on Opening Night there was a free public community 'party' event in the BFI Riverside Bar. Concurrently, an industry-based private party was hosted in the Delegate Centre, severed from the wider space by a red velvet rope.

communities and provides a tailored and empowering point of connection for a disparate population; these tributary spaces protect the communities that they serve.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES

Given the aforementioned lack of community 'sites' or familial structures for cultural transmission, the *constructi[on of] community space* at the LLGFF can be appreciated as an important mechanism in the cultivation of LGBTQ, queer-film industry and queer-cinephile communities. As a point of cultural, political and social connection, the festival promotes the cultivation of these communities in three main ways: creating linkages, enculturation and looking to the future. Firstly, this space operates as a bridge to link disparate groups and can potentially contribute to the fostering of a collective sense of our community *[connecting communities]*, as the below extract suggests:

> *It's like an* ***occupation*** *[of the space]! [...] It* ***brings sections of the queer community together*** *[...] It's* ***bringing all these people*** *into the same building and I think that's really important. [...] From my perspective, there are sections of the queer community that I don't engage with and it is really* ***amazing to meet all these different people***.
>
> (Participant 5)

In cultivating a more integrated and consolidated 'community' the festival also plays a role in drawing in those at the queer cultural periphery, those on the fringes of sub-cultures/communities and those who do not (or no longer) engage with the 'scene' *[connecting communities; securing the margins & facilitating newcomers]*.

Secondly, the LLGFF operates as a pivotal mechanism through which the queer cinephile community in particular can be both nurtured *[1.3 Perpetuating Through Education]* and further propagated *[reaching out]*. For those with an interest in queer cinema, the valuable and uncommon experience of collective queer cinematic viewing that the festival affords is highlighted in the below extract *[experiencing collectively]*:

> *Some people still say "Why do we have a lesbian and gay film festival?" but I don't think there will ever be a time, as long as there are people who identify as LGBT, that there won't be people making films that, as long as we have cinemas... There is a notion that if something is on YouTube or DVD or television, then that is enough. But* ***there is something magical about that alchemy of the shared communal viewing experience that changes how you see a film****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Furthermore, the value that the festival has in potentially connecting or introducing wider audiences to aspects of queer culture (and thus propagating an awareness of and engagement with queer cultures/histories) echoes throughout the interview material. In the below example, this participant displays a long-term commitment to this aspect of queer community cultivation:

> *I've always been interested in the* ***expression of gay culture****. [...] I set up an organisation called 'The House of Homosexual Culture', which wasn't really specifically about film but it was about trying to* ***bring some of the benefits of research in the academy — queer studies and historical research — to a wider audience****. [...] It's still* ***something that really does motivate me,*** *the notion of* ***bringing queer culture to a wider audience****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Finally, there is an interest in preserving festival communities through cultivation of the 'next generation' of LGBTQ and queer-filmmaking communities *[1.3 Perpetuating Through Education; (re)defining scope]*. The below excerpt illustrates the concern of the festival-organising community to engage with future generations:

> *Are we going to start seeing people coming out a lot* ***younger****? And,* ***what are we going to provide for them?*** *Because obviously a lot of the films aren't necessarily suitable for very young children. [...] I wouldn't feel 100% comfortable with them coming to see everything that I've programmed.* ***But they should be able to come here and there should be a space for them to... to be safe****.*
>
> (Participant 4)

As previously discussed (see sub-section 2.3 of Chapter II), existing outwith familial mechanisms of transmission of history and culture, the communities that permeate the LLGFF are in need of continued cultivation and renewal through the

incorporation of new members and the consolidation of existing members, both peripheral and central. Overall, the LLGFF plays a critical role in physically bringing together divergent elements of LGBTQ communities *[constructing community space; connecting communities]*. Furthermore, the festival reaches out to those at the periphery *[3.1 Protecting Membership]* through the provision of specialist events and an alternative community space to 'the scene'. In both of these guises, the festival can be seen to contribute to the generation and cultivation of an overarching collective sense of community. Similarly, the LLGFF is a focal mechanism for the propagation of queer cinephile communities. Thus, it is through continuous iterations of the festival that these communities are cultivated and ultimately protected in the longer-term. Critically, as a festival inextricably interwoven with festival communities, protecting these communities ultimately acts as a mechanism in *safeguarding* the festival itself.

The three practices explored above enable appreciation of the order-producing processes through which the LLGFF plays a role in protecting the multiple communities that permeate and interpenetrate the festival. In enacting organisation, the potential transience of the festival is somewhat evaded and an enduring sense of the 'LLGFF' (and its plurality of telos and commitments) is engendered and cemented. The community formed around the direct organisation of the festival is protected by this propagation of a durable and robust (yet versatile) 'LLGFF', as are the communities which congregate/connect in the community space constructed during the festival and also those that rely somewhat upon the LLGFF to preserve and document their myriad cultures and histories. Through these interconnected practices, the festival operates as a fertile and established terrain or site that both safeguards its own future and protects festival communities and cultivates them for future iterations.

1.3 - PERPETUATING THROUGH EDUCATION

This category comprises three practices — *propagating industry*, *sustaining cross-generational learning* and *educating outsiders (and us)* — discussed below, which serve to perpetuate the LLGFF, queer-film industry and LGBTQ communities through education. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 18 overleaf.

PROPAGATING INDUSTRY

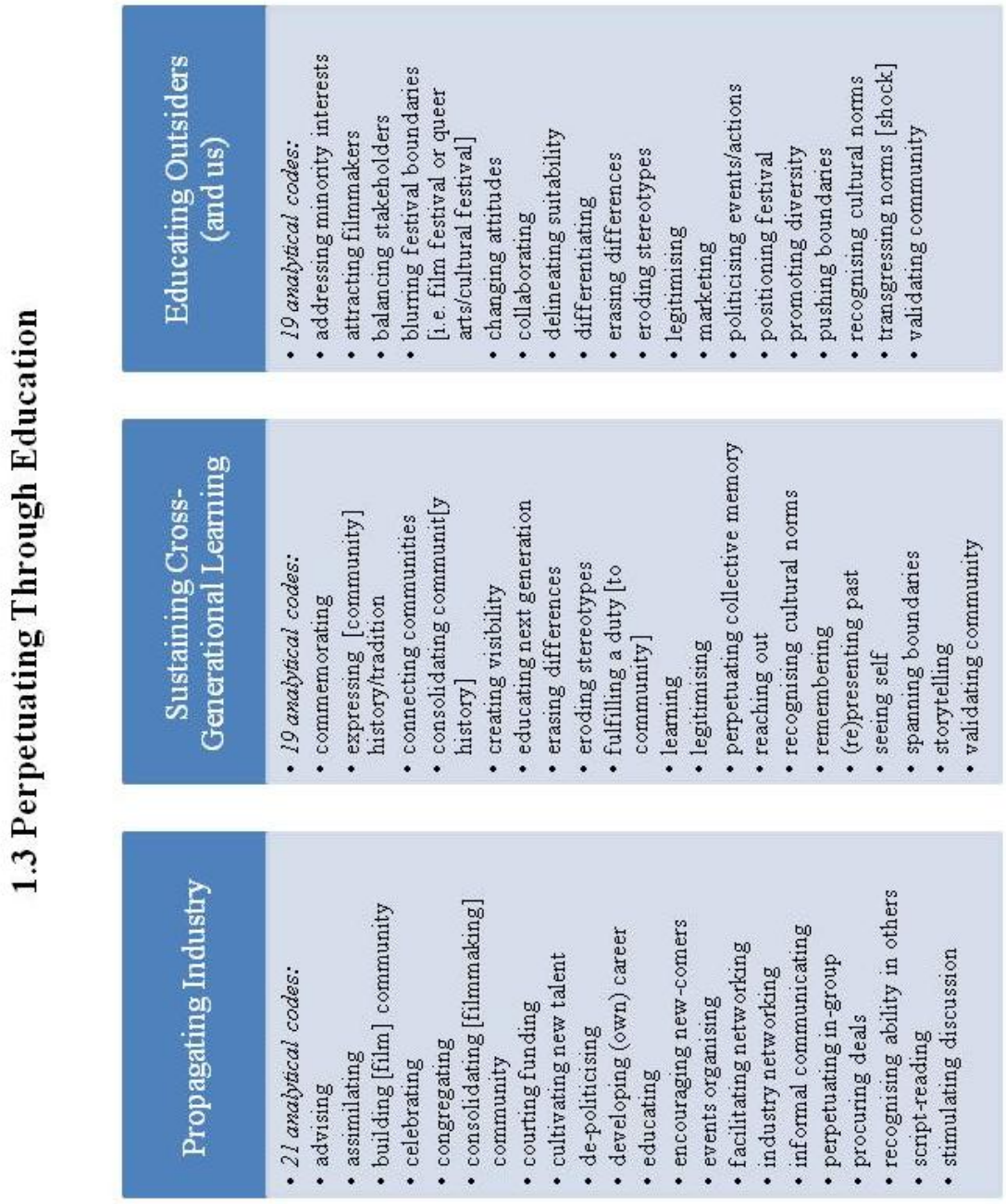
The queer-film industry is arguably more established than ever. However, as the below excerpt illuminates, as with all professions a degree of training is necessary in order to both create quality films and operate effectively within the industry:

> *With digital technology there are many more people making films than there were 26 years ago.* ***There is no shortage of material. But, what there is is a real shortage of quality filmmaking. People think you can just pick up a camera and start making a film.*** *And, it's just not the case. I mean you don't pick up a violin and try and perform a symphony from scratch.*
>
> (Participant 1)

A key dimension of the LLGFF is its role in the development of queer filmmakers: as a venue for exhibition, a networking opportunity and as a formal provider of education. The manifestations of this role vary from year to year and the ways in which the LLGFF promulgates practices of queer filmmaking extends far beyond those events or workshops listed in the festival programme under the title of 'Education and Industry' Four events of note from the 26th LLGFF (taken from across the festival programme) are outlined below.

The 'Future Film Programme' is a collaboration between the LLGFF and the Future Film scheme run by the BFI *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries]*, which provides an opportunity for young filmmakers and writers to 'learn more about their

Figure 18: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Perpetuating Through Education'



craft' (BFI, unknown-d). Further to this role as a launch-pad for development, the festival also provides training for early-career filmmakers through a collaboration with *Creative Skillset*[82] in the form of a professional-training workshop entitled 'Now We are Here: Professional Development for Filmmakers' *[reaching out]*:

> *30 **selected** **LGBT filmmakers** seeking to move into feature film will **join acclaimed filmmakers and industry guests** to look at the **success of recent queer films** in the **mainstream**, how LGBT filmmakers have **overcome barriers** to bring their stories to the big screen and to **achieve recognition** and discuss **what needs to be done to sustain and improve the position of queer filmmaking in the market place**. **Applications** are open to [... those] who have made two or more publically-exhibited shorts or broadcast programmes.*
>
> (*Creative Skillset* website, 2012)

Aside from these more 'formal' educative roles, the festival also has the potential to connect neophyte filmmakers with more experienced peers whom they can learn from *[4.1 Professional Networking; sustaining cross-generational learning]*, as this filmmaker and volunteer describes: 'it is a good place to **network** and meet people' (Participant 7). This is echoed by an industry delegate and film distributor, who notably also comments on the *gatekeeping* role that the LLGFF plays within queer-filmmaking communities:

> *It gives us a bit of a chance to **meet filmmakers**.... **as long as people are let in**, it gives **younger** **filmmakers** or short or **'wannabe'** filmmakers the opportunity of **meeting other people within the industry**. Whether they be distributors or people who are **experienced** feature filmmakers, or people from other festivals. [...] It just **depends how exclusive the events generally are.** I know that usually they are **badge-only**, in that everybody had to have a badge of some kind to be **allowed in**. And they were generally **by invitation**.*
>
> (Participant 11)

Thirdly, efforts are made to actively target those marginalised LGBTQ sub-cultures who are under-represented in quality queer filmmaking. For instance, this is evidenced by the free (but ticketed) trans-filmmaking networking event that followed the panel discussion 'Transgender Representation, Are We Nearly There Yet?'. Its purpose was to forge connections between those interested in exploring trans stories,

[82] Creative Industries Sector Skills Council, see <http://www.creativeskillset.org/>.

themes and motifs through film, in order to stimulate filmmaking and ultimately yield a greater volume of trans-interest cinema. Finally, the festival provides a shop-window for showcasing works-in-progress, such as *'Alice Walker Beauty in Truth* + Q&A'[83]. This serves a dual function of raising awareness of a work in order to attract funding for post-production and also in illuminating the processes of filmmaking for aspiring filmmakers.

LGBTQ communities are predominantly reliant upon the queer-film industry to tell our stories, to document our cultures and as a mechanism of transmission through which to communicate those cultures/histories to wider queer communities and beyond *[educating outsiders (and us)]*. The LLGFF plays a key generative role in propagating the queer-film industry through both formal educational programmes and also, as will be further discussed in 4.1, through networking and informal learning opportunities, which the festival provides as a point of connection across industry sub-divisions and generations. This is, in turn, evidently a central aspect in *safeguarding* the festival and in perpetuating queer communities (by cultivating their understanding of our [sub-]cultures, histories and stories) in the longer-term.

SUSTAINING CROSS-GENERATIONAL LEARNING: *WITHIN THE QUEER-FILM INDUSTRY AND THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY*

In *propagating industry* the LLGFF drives cross-generational[84] learning within the queer-film industry. However, it also stimulates cross-generational learning within the wider LGBTQ communities with regards to festival lineage, the movements of queer cinema and our shared cultures and histories. As previously delineated, one flow of learning is from previous generations to current/future generations *[1.1 Preserving History and Tradition]*, exemplified in events such as the '25th LLGFF Anniversary

[83] (Dir: Parmar; USA-UK, finally released 2013).
[84] Generation is not utilised here to convey a discrete or distinct group based on age. Rather, it is understood as a (temporal) grouping of LGBTQ individuals according to various identities and movements (political, historical and social).

Lecture'.[85] Moreover, the LLGFF operates as a chronicle (and chronicler) of queer cinema and is the 'one-time of the year that people can come to the NFT[86] to **watch contemporary queer cinema, and see how it has changed over the years**' (Participant 12).

Equally, this is reciprocated through a programme of events and films that presents current and historical cultural/political concerns to all, stimulating mutual learning between and across generations of elders, our peers and young queer individuals. For instance, to the lesbian-feminist movement of the 1970-80s, 'feminist pornography' would be an aberrative and oxymoronic programming choice. Yet, the below extract illustrates how a young programmer was able to include this in-vogue queer concern in the festival programme without any overt dissent *[connecting communities; (re)defining scope]*:

> *Last year I decided that we were going to have a **consciousness-raising session** about **feminist porn**. And, show some porn. At the BFI. In the day time. On Mother's Day. And **no-one batted an eyelid**. They were just like "yeah sure, how many chairs do you need?"*
>
> (Participant 4)

Similarly, another flow is from current to future generations. A concern to both serve and integrate 'youth' was perceptible throughout the interview material. One participant, a school-teacher and programmer, elaborates:

> *I'm really hoping that next year we'll be able to **link up** with Gay-Straight Alliances from **schools** [...] It would be really nice to **bring those young people in**. [...] Lots of people are coming out younger, lots of people are much more confident about it [...] I think we need to maybe think about **provision** for those younger people. [...]**There is always a youth programme** that runs and some people come in for that. But youth is such a large category, it's up to 25, and often it's the older ones that come in. But **I feel like we need to be doing more around education**.*
>
> (Participant 4)

[85] See Robinson (2011).
[86] National Film Theatre, former name of the British Film Institute building on the Southbank.

This flow to future generations is reflected in the festival-related sense of duty towards providing educational and networking opportunities to neophyte queer filmmakers *[3.1 Protecting Membership; 4.1 Professional Networking]*. Cross-generational learning is thus facilitated in this sense at events such as 'Now We Are Here: Professional Development for Filmmakers', which offered budding filmmakers the chance to meet and learn from established figures in the wider queer-cinema industry (who gave advice on myriad topics such as funding, distribution and exhibition).

It is pertinent to note that cross-generational learning is not delimited or characterised by a specific geographical backdrop of British cinema. The programmers actively seek out global material of varying quality, indicative of a commitment to explore issues that may now appear somewhat anachronistic in the UK and to educate generations with regards to their global peers. The below extract presents a former programmer's comments with regards to a 2012 film from South-East Asia:

> *I don't know if homosexuality is legal there even... **they are almost ten, fifteen years behind us**. When I was doing the festival we wanted to programme films from South-East Asia but the story lines were very simplistic and... we were so used to seeing sophisticated stories here. They just weren't at that stage but they'll get there.*
>
> (Participant 12)

Existing outwith familial and ordered mechanisms of transmission for histories and cultures, the LLGFF provides a unique point of connection which fosters cross-generational learning in a multitude of directions and flows. This order-producing facet of the LLGFF provides the signposts and flags to navigate a complex and multi-layered terrain of community cultures and histories not fully comprehensible to any single generation or individual. Thus, this practice is a mechanism for the perpetuation through education that contributes to the *safeguarding* of the LLGFF, queer cinema, the queer-film industry, and LGBTQ communities, culture and history.

EDUCATING OUTSIDERS (AND US)

As has been previously discussed, there are numerous practices that permeate the LLGFF and which serve to educate festival communities. For instance, those that provide a point of access to or promote a deeper understanding of: our collective memory of shared histories, traditions and cultures; the movements, tropes, concerns, icons and motifs of queer cinema; and the mechanisms and networks of the queer-film industry. In a similar vein, the LLGFF is a site in which audiences are introduced to new filmic material or genres, as reflected in the concerns of this programmer in the below example:

> *I felt that **I made a difference**. **I brought some films or type of cinema to people's attention that they wouldn't have known about** at all. I **changed people's perspectives** about things or turned people onto things. I think that was my biggest achievement. **I was kind of a conduit, a platform** for people to see new types of cinema. That's the thing that **I've felt most proud** about.*
>
> (Participant 12)

Notably, the festival can also serve as a point of introduction to queer cinema and culture to the heterosexual mainstream. A direct example of this can be found, as the following excerpt demonstrates, in the posting of the programme to *all* BFI members *[validating festival]*: 'I really love that **it goes to all [BFI] members**. **There's no kind of "well, do you want to know about the gay and lesbian film festival?"** It's like "No! Here is our other festival, and it's amazing!"' (Participant 4). The wider societal impact of *reaching out* to outsiders and educating them about queer concerns is articulated in this response to the researcher's open question 'Do you think that queer cinema is as important nowadays?':

> *We are still a minority that is... not treated the same as heterosexuality. I think if you've not got a space, and if you've not got films that reflect that we are still a minority then how are you going to **change the wider world's perception of who we are?** It's just as important as it ever was, and more so! Because countries that have been repressing homosexuality for years are trying to change their laws [...] we need to **support those countries** [...] Film is one of the key ways to do that. **Through film we can tell stories that reflect our lives, you can have documentaries that expose homophobia and expose***

wrong-doings against us. That's why it matters. That's why it's important. I fundamentally believe that.

(Participant 2)

Ultimately, the LLGFF can be considered to play a multifaceted role as an educator for outsiders and LGBTQ communities alike. In particular, this practice facilitates the introduction to and augmentation of understanding of queer concerns and cultures, thus universally enabling a deeper appreciation of what it means to be 'LGBTQ':

I think it's really important to have ***more of a cultural understanding****. [...]* ***Being gay isn't just going to a club****, it's a lot more of a cultural... it's a kind of queer and cultural experience and it's broader and more intelligent and... more inclusive and creative and interesting.*

(Participant 14)

The LLGFF serves as visible symbol *[representing communities]* and channel through which to widen and develop outsiders' (namely, non-LGBTQ) understanding of LGBTQ communities/cultures and concerns. In fostering a greater affinity between LGBTQ communities and outsiders, the festival simultaneously safeguards multiple communities and affirms the perpetual need for the festival itself. Furthermore, implicit lessons can be drawn from festival material (by both these groups) with regards to the diversity of LGBTQ communities, which contributes to the legitimation of queer cultures *[representing communities]* and questioning of stereotypes *[engaging with stereotypes]*. Finally, and as will be further explored, the festival operates as an arbiter of taste and a credible source of appraisal of queer cinema *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*, potentially widening and developing the cinematic palates of audience members.

The three practices explored above provide a structure through which to consider how preservation of the histories, traditions and cultures of the festival communities (and their identity-forming properties) is perpetuated through education. Furthermore, the festival plays an order-producing role in mediating the relationships between festival communities, both laterally and across generations, and in the propagation of the queer-film industry itself. The safeguarding effects of these practices

radiate along numerous channels and, ultimately, this sub-section has illumined the LLGFF as a firm focal point of interaction between festival communities and outsiders.

1.4 - SUSTAINING WIDE ORGANISATIONAL REMIT

This category comprises three practices — *managing change*, *maintaining multiplicity* and *upholding tradition* — discussed below, which serve to sustain the wide organisational remit of the LLGFF in terms of both its diverse programme and the plurality of telos that imbues the festival. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 19 overleaf.

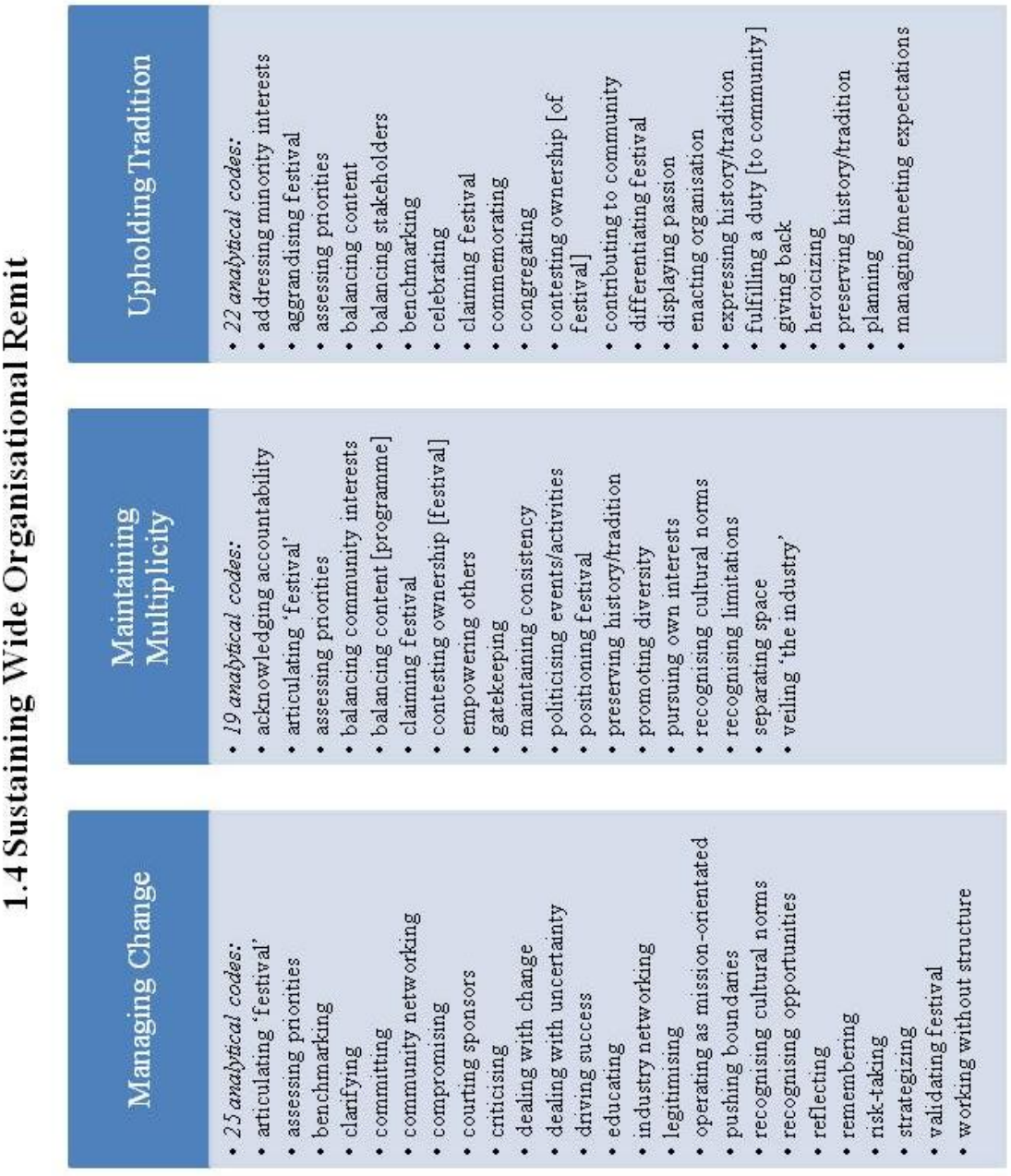
MANAGING CHANGE:
STEERING THE FESTIVAL

The long-standing actively adaptive nature of the LLGFF is elucidated in the below example:

> *The first festival that we date our festival lineage from... is the 'Gays' Own Pictures' strand. [...] I think* ***it was seen as quite a political act to go to a gay film festival****. It was activists who came... and it wasn't* ***seen as something that people who went to nightclubs would necessarily be interested in****. In that it was a kind of continuation of activist practice in a way. It was* ***for film buffs and activists*** *in a rather strange way. But* ***we broadened our appeal as the gay world has got bigger and more visible****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

The ability of the festival to successfully manage change is also highlighted by a programmer with over a decade of involvement, whom, notably, has presented a historical account of the evolution of the festival: '[it] changes personality with its increasing years [...] The festival is a completely different beast to what it was ten years ago, to what it was twenty years ago' (Participant 2). Furthermore, the elements of the festival and the 'recipe' for the weighted inclusion of events/film-genres that constitute the programme have been continuously amended throughout the history of the LLGFF. Some constituents, such as the 'LLGFF on Tour', have even been discarded altogether due to extant financial circumstances.

Figure 19: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Sustaining Wide Organisational Remit'



This practice-activity displays resilience, as evidenced by the renewed wide organisational remit of 2012 (mapped out by the festival-organising community) rising from the embers of the drastic cuts that affected the 2011 festival. Pride in the ability of the LLGFF community to successfully negotiate this period of change is apparent in the comments made by this programmer: 'it feels like a really positive idea to be **exploding people's expectations** [following the cuts]… and being like, "**we're back**" and actually **we can still do this and, in fact, it's going to be better**' (Participant 4).

Most fundamentally, the festival must negotiate shifting conceptualisations of its key stakeholders: the communities that it serves *[validating festival; contesting ownership]*.[87] An example of note relates to the ongoing evolution of the 'LGBT' community. The below extract illuminates particularly the relatively nascent incorporation of the intersex community into the LLGFF *[recognising stakeholders; representing communities]*, mirroring a wider phenomenon of inclusion in (an idealised conception of) the LGBTQ/queer collective consciousness.

> ***With any new idea**, people start off "grrr" and then **gradually incorporate it**. When you first heard all the letters, LGBT…QI... everyone was like "this is ridiculous!" But actually it goes into their brains. Nobody has said "why have you programmed Orchids[88]? It's about a heterosexual woman?" [...]. People have been really interested to see the film. I think **it's relevant because there is such a crossover** […] it's about gender, it's about an alternative [...] No-one's asked the question, **no-one's being critical**, no-one's thought this is **taking up a space.** When the intersex group came, they were happy to come here and they weren't thinking "why do we have to go to this when **we maybe don't identify** as lesbian and gay". **It seems like, to me, there's been a shift in openness**.*
>
> (Participant 3)

Like any organisation, the LLGFF must successfully manage change in order to safeguard its future. The wide organisational remit of the festival, bound up in a plurality of telos *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival; 5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*, can only be safeguarded through balancing of the anchor of an established festival format *[upholding tradition]* and shrewd adaption to wider

[87] As will be shown, these principally include queer cinephiles, queer filmmakers, the queer-cinema industry, and diverse elements of a wider 'collective' LGBTQ population.
[88] *Orchids, My Intersex Adventure* (Dir: Hart; Australia, 2010).

phenomena. Of particular note, the ever-evolving cultural, social and political milieu in which LGBTQ communities are situated is mirrored in the simultaneous metamorphosis of the LLGFF. Similarly, the festival must be mindful of shifting trends and new patterns in queer cinema. Ultimately, *safeguarding* of the festivals' wide (and appropriate) remit is ensured through the tempering of the need for versatility with the continual reengagement with and consideration of the current value of the anchor of extant organisational facets.

MAINTAINING MULTIPLICITY:
A BROAD PROGRAMME FOR A BROAD CHURCH

The multiplicity inherent to the LLGFF is most apparent in the diverse programme of films, which includes: features, documentaries, biopics, shorts, archive cinema and experimental film. Moreover, each of these filmic categories could be further broken down according to which films primarily address each LGBTQ sub-culture or interest group. The inconsistency and intangibility of the 'queer experience' renders the possibilities for variation and combinations endless. However, festival organisers do make a concerted effort to represent these sub-cultures *[representing communities]* as the below extract demonstrates:

> *When this current team was formed four years ago, I think it was noticed by the panel that our audience — our audience mix but also our programming mix from previous festivals — that there were* ***segments of the audience and segments of films that we were missing*** *because they didn't have* ***dedicated people*** *to go out there and find those films.*
>
> (Participant 2)

The purposive layering of multiplicity also results from the programmers differentiated tastes in film, a sentiment echoed universally in programmer interviews and particularly in the below excerpt *[pursuing own interests]*:

> ***It's very rare that we'll have something that two people want**. Maybe this year the Patty Schemel documentary[89], Programmer X and I were both really keen on that… but it's very rarely that there will be something that two of us are like "No! I want it! I want to do that Q&A!"*
>
> (Participant 4)

As will be further discussed in '2.1 - Positioning Festival', throughout the interview data the LLGFF is advantageously equated with the BFI's prestigious London Film Festival and promoted as being committed to showcasing the pinnacle of queer artistic filmmaking *across genres*. For this reason, the LLGFF is often compared favourably against other queer-film festivals:

> ***That's what makes us different**, is that **we do take risks**... but people respond to it. There are **lots of gay and lesbian festivals that have no experimental work, that don't understand it and don't care about it**... or won't show documentaries... or only want **positive representations** of LGBT life.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Outwith the films, the multiplicity of the programme (and also of the festival itself) is ensured through engagement with diverse community groups, in order to put the *construct[ed] community space* to a variety of uses in hosting educational events, parties, networking events, panel discussions, etc. One programmer went so far as to suggest that what '**make[s] the space work**' is the diverse events, which ensure that '**there is a richness**' to the festival (Participant 1).

The festival community is exceptionally conscious of the manifold LGBTQ sub-cultures that comprise their main audiences, and display a sense of duty to these communities *[representing communities]*. This is manifest in the purposive hiring of programmers with divergent interests that reflect this *[representing communities; contesting ownership; pursuing own interests]*. Additionally, the variety of film-genres that constitute the festival programme is ensured through a commitment to the ideals of the aesthetic dimensions of (queer) cinema. Ultimately, the multiplicity of the LLGFF is a product of the plurality of telos that permeate the festival and the diversity of the festival communities which intersect it. This miscellany of multiple festival

[89] *Hit So Hard* (Dir: Ebersole; USA, 2011).

communities, forms and motifs of queer cinema, political ideologies, sub-cultures and interest groups, and LGBTQ community organisations necessitates a wide organisational remit if the LLGFF is to successfully engage with these myriad groups. Thus, maintaining multiplicity is a key mechanism through which to sustain a wide organisational remit and thus safeguard the varied communities that are interwoven into the fabric of the LLGFF but also the festival itself by cementing its value and legitimacy to its key stakeholders.

UPHOLDING TRADITION:
(UN/)EXPECTED FESTIVAL 'MUST HAVES'

As has been previously argued, various practices enacted at the LLGFF play a key role in *preserving [the] history and tradition[s]* of the festival and those communities which permeate it. Similarly, *maintaining multiplicity* of the festival and *sustaining wide organisational remit* are inherent facets of the festival that have, through their repeated iterations, become (festival cementing) traditions in their own right. The below excerpt highlights the relationship between perceiving audiences and upholding tradition through the repeated enactment of their supposed interests: '**we'll always have** a feature-film section, we always... you know, we have documentaries, we have features, we have our shorts, **we know *that works*, we know people like to come and see it that way**' (Participant 2). Outwith the filmic programme, functional elements of the festival can become conceptualised as cementing traditions in their own right. For instance, the 2011 omission of the dedicated film-industry-community space of the 'Delegate Centre'[90] (the epicentre for industry provision at the LLGFF) sparked outrage amongst many members of this community who saw this as an essential part of the festival. Similarly, the cementing mechanisms of *enacting organisation* imbues the festival with enduring and, indeed, 'traditional' values and meaning. This volunteer explains how these traditional values attracted him to gift labour to the festival:

[90] The 'Delegate Centre' (or 'Blue Room') is a restricted-access area on the upper floor (for programmers, staff, invited 'talent', distributors, press, industry delegates etc.), featuring a screening library, free bar and sofa area and often used to host invite-only networking events.

> ***It's the ideals that the festival are built upon*** *that I think is the most influential reason why a lot of the volunteers chose to give our time, energy, effort and whatever else we can. I'm glad to see us come together and work as a really good unit to... make it all run as smoothly as possible.*
>
> (Participant 8)

Novel LGBTQ community-focused elements of the festival can quickly become 'traditions' and conceptualised by the community as essential *[contesting ownership]*. A notable example is the 2012 official omission of the nascent 'Family Day' (where LGBTQ parents can bring their children into a queer-family friendly space and attend dedicated events, i.e. LGBTQ-themed animated shorts aimed at children). However, as the below extract demonstrates, LGBTQ community members recognised that this event usually occurred at a specific stage of the festival (i.e. the second Saturday afternoon) and 'attended' the BFI Southbank regardless of the official programme:

> *Programmer X's children's parties that have been happening have been really nice. We're not doing one this year but that doesn't seem to have stopped people from talking about 'Family Day' happening on Saturday and it's like "What family day?* ***We're not organising one!****" **They are all coming anyway**! [laughs] They are **making their own** family day.*
>
> (Participant 4)

Finally, it is worth noting that an association exists between the LLGFF and another iconic annual festival imbued with tradition. This is manifest in the comments of attendees on official and community social-media channels and was voiced by several participants: 'Everyone's here, it is gay, people call it "**Gay Christmas**" [laughs]' (Participant 4).

A key mechanism for the safeguarding of a diverse organisational remit is the manner in which functions and elements of the festival are upheld as traditional aspects of the LLGFF. Through its enactment, this practice has a pivotal cementing and order-producing function in outlining the 'traditional' constituents of the festival — which 'should' be included in any iteration — and in reinforcing the values and meaning fostered through and by the LLGFF. Notably, audiences and the myriad festival communities are not passive 'recipients' of traditions but, in fact, define their own and even, as demonstrated above, contravene the 'official' organisational remit as defined in

any given year. In drawing a comparison between the LLGFF and Christmas, the associated connotations of gathering, celebrating (and celebrating who we are), 'family' get-togethers, reflecting *[remembering]*, and gifts (a festival 'offering') are called to mind in the conceptualisation of the festival.[91]

The three practices explored above illuminate the order-producing processes through which the wide remit of the festival, incorporating a plurality of telos and stakeholders, is sustained and cemented across iterations. Thus, safeguarding is achieved through recognition and due consideration of festival history and the already defined myriad blocks which have traditionally constituted or come to constitute the LLGFF. Simultaneously, due consideration is given to the shifting political, cultural and social environment in which the festival and constituent communities must operate in the present, in order to successfully manage change and safeguard the ability of the LLGFF to enjoy a continued relevance to multi-layered communities.

[91] In a similar vein, the annual *Eurovision* competition is often referred to by some elements of the LGBTQ communities as a "gay" festival, holiday, celebration or, indeed, "gay Christmas".

1.5 - SUMMARY: INSIGHTS FROM 'PRACTICES OF SAFEGUARDING'

It is clear from the above excerpts that *safeguarding* the histories, traditions and cultural memory of LGBTQ communities/sub-cultures, the queer-film industry (and queer cinema) and the festival itself is an integral facet and mechanism of the continued enactment of the LLGFF. Crucially, this also lends a sense of temporal continuity and permanence that thus helps to secure the future of these groups and, crucially, the festival in the years to come. The twelve practices explored in this section illuminate the (preserving, protecting, perpetuating and sustaining) processes through which *safeguarding* occurs, during and across iterations. Furthermore, in drawing together a fractured and differentially engaged audience, these interconnected practices safeguard both the archive and future of queer cinema as an artistic artefact and form of cultural (and sometimes political) exchange and expression. Ultimately, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the *safeguarding* practices examined herein have been shown to support the continuity of this transient, temporary festival organisation through the maintenance of three significant 'anchors' that act to circumvent ephemerality: remembering, place and tradition.

Prior to moving onto discussion of the second theme in the next section of this chapter, '2: Legitimising', it is pertinent to again note that relevant theoretical and practical insights emerging from each theme are considered in the following chapter, 'V: Discussion and Conclusions'.

2: LEGITIMISING: *FESTIVAL (VALUE) AND DECISIONS UNDERLYING ITS ENACTMENT*

"It's really important that there's a showcase for LGBT filmmakers because I don't necessarily think that they do get into the big festivals. [...] By their very nature sometimes LGBT film, and the way it is made, [...] it's done on a budget, it's done in a very different way to other films. [...] And if we didn't have a space for them to be nurtured then they can't grow as filmmakers, they can't make it into the big-time and they can't then bring bigger queerer stories to the masses. You've got to think back in the day, twenty years ago, the likes of Todd Haynes and Tom Kalin and Gregg Araki, big filmmaking names, all started out on the queer-film-festival circuit."

(Participant 2)

"It's [the BFI] a national institute so it reaches a larger audience, adds to the visibility of the community and issues surrounding it. And the sole fact it's been held in such a renowned institution adds to the credibility of LGBT filmmaking, [the LGBT] community and the issues surrounding it."

(Participant 10)

"It's 'the' British Film Institute. So, in a way it's creating its own kind of codification and official stance on, you know, queer culture and the films that are shown there."

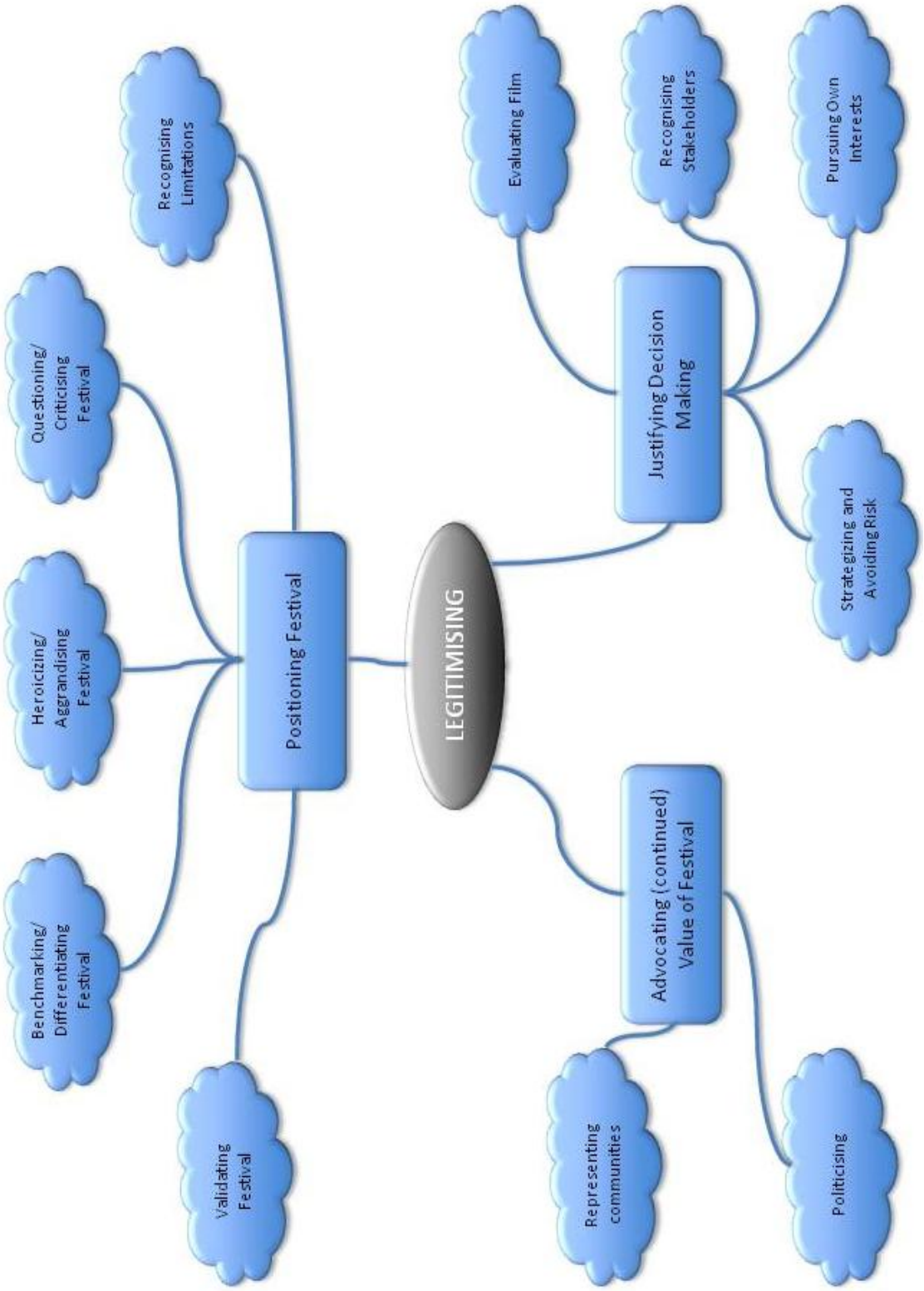
(Participant 6)

"Queer cinema is completely different from mainstream cinema. Queer filmmakers, basically a lot of them are self-taught, some of them have gone to film school but their stories, I mean the stories are, love stories are universal. But there is something about the queer experience that is really different. And ... I've found that [...] a lot of queer filmmakers, and it still happens now, they want to position their film for mainstream film festivals - obviously because they want the bigger exposure. But there are still a lot of queer filmmakers, like Campbell who have always known who her audience is, or are. And she knows, she makes films for a queer audience."

(Participant 12)

Resounding from the epigraphs on the preceding page is a sense of the pervasive desire to answer a prevailing (silent and voiced) question, from both queer and non-queer, regarding the place of a specialist queer-film festival in the twenty-first century (given the perceived relative strides made in the journey towards legal and social equality). As such, the second theme to be examined in this chapter is 'Legitimising'. This thematic grouping comprises three component categories, which will be presented in the following corresponding sub-sections: (2.1) Positioning Festival; (2.2) Justifying Decision-Making; and (2.3) Advocating (continued) Value of Festival. These categories in turn comprise a total of eleven practices, as illuminated in Figure 20 overleaf, which will be discussed in relation to relevant data extracts. Finally, a summary section (2.4) will elaborate upon the theme of 'Legitimising'.

Figure 20: Legitimising Theme



2.1 - POSITIONING FESTIVAL

This category comprises five practices — *validating festival, benchmarking/ differentiating festival, heroicizing/aggrandising festival, questioning/criticizing festival* and *recognising limitations* — discussed below, which serve to position the LLGFF amongst other film festivals and outline its relationships with constituent festival communities. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these five practices are shown in Figure 21 overleaf.

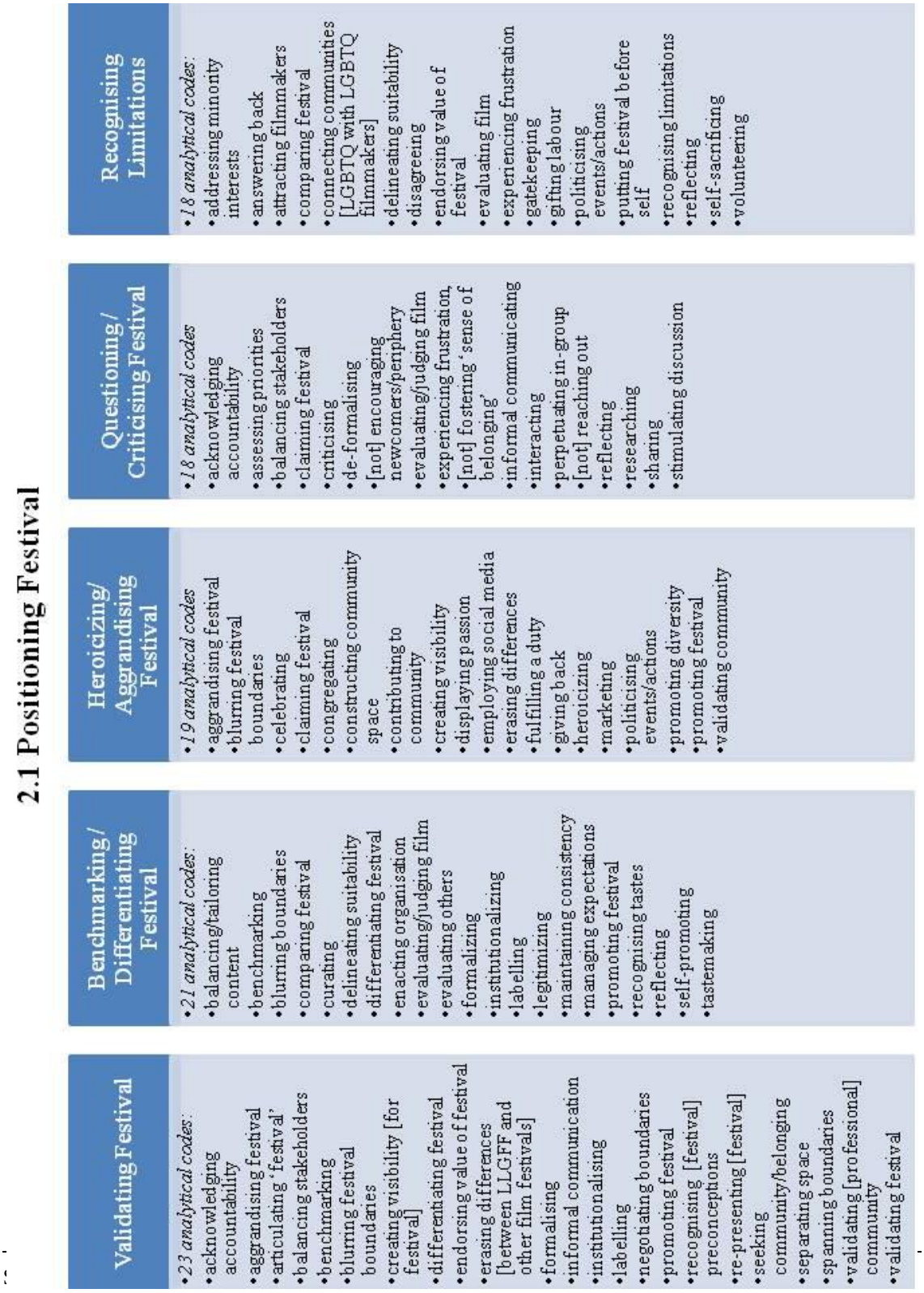
VALIDATING FESTIVAL: *COEXISTING, INTERPENETRATING YET DIFFERING CONCEPTUALISATIONS*

Perhaps the most striking element of the interview material, in terms of its ubiquitous nature, was the concern of participants to orally 'validate' the LLGFF to the researcher. This is echoed in much of the festival literature and involves positioning the festival as a legitimate example of either/both a:

A. **'high-brow, artistic film festival'**, comparable with Cannes, Berlinale, Sundance etc. (i.e. showcasing top quality art-house, experimental, independent and world-cinema but with a LGBTQ theme or relevance).
B. **'community-based/centred (film) festival'**, that has a role in: showcasing new talent and *[f]acilitating newcomers* from the queer-filmmaking community; *representing [LGBTQ] communities* and endorsing sub-cultures that comprise these communities in events/film programming; and, as *the* community-based film festival, operating as a large highly-regarded tastemaker amongst other LGBTQ-film festivals such as Outfest (LA) and Frameline (San Francisco).[92]

[92]Although not an exhaustive list, additional examples include: [Canada] Image and Nation (Montréal), Inside Out (Toronto); [USA] Atlanta's Out on Film, Boston LGBT Film Festival, Miami Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, NewFest (New York), Polari (Austin), Reeling (Chicago) Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival; [Europe] Cineffable (Paris), Fire! (Barcelona), Gaze (Dublin), Identities (Vienna), Lesbisch

Figure 21: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Positioning Festival'



VinoKino (Finland); [Rest of World] Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Out in Africa (Johannesburg & Cape Town, SA), Out Takes (Wellington, NZ), Queer Fruits (Bryon Bay, AUS) and Queer Screen (Sydney).

C. **'professional film festival'** (i.e. top-quality projection, supported by infrastructure, excellent industry provision and networking opportunities, good industry statistics [i.e. occupancy rates], inclusion of workshops/round-table discussions exploring relevant industry issues, a 'real festival' not just a 'discrete series of films' [Participant 1]), often compared in interview material as on a par with the BFI London Film Festival [hereafter LFF].

Participants generally did not give equal weight to each of these aspects in their characterisation of the criterion on which the festival drew validity and some made no reference at all to conceptualisation C (professional). Nevertheless, *all* participants alluded to both conceptualisations A (high-brow) and B (community-based) in positioning the LLGFF as valid and significant.

Evidently, the festival takes place at the BFI Southbank: a building synonymous with high-brow cinema (conceptualisation A) and an area that is a noted cultural hub in London. In a similar vein, *validating [the] festival* is enabled through allusions to a powerful artefact: the 'British Film Institute' brand and its associated prestige, as this excerpt highlights: 'obviously the BFI has got a huge profile so that really helps [...] I think it gives it legitimacy and it gives it a kind of an authority' (Participant 5). Additionally, the utilisation of extant BFI structures (and the professional practices that underlie and drive them) plays a particular role in *validating festival* conceptualisation C. This is highlighted in the below excerpt in which a participant compares the LLGFF to other LGBTQ-film festivals *[benchmarking/differentiating festival]*:

> ***We have a very professional structure to operate within*** *[...]. They [other LGBTQ festivals] may not have some of the* ***structures*** *that we have in terms of a* ***Marketing Department, a Print Coordinating Department, permanent projection facilities and projectionist*** *[...]. There is a* ***very professional core to our festival****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Furthermore, for all conceptualisations artefacts are utilised in the enactment of *validating festival*, as the recourse to statistical information and targets illuminates in the below example:

> *Last year's festival was running at **89% capacity.** If you look at **statistics about festival and cinema occupancy** you will know that, I think the BFI London Film Festival, which is **perceived to be in industry terms hugely successful**, runs at about **79% capacity** [...]. As a fifteen day festival we [LLGFF] were the **third-largest film festival in the UK** and total audience was running around **28 or 29000**.*
>
> (Participant 1)

In positioning the festival based upon the community-based interpretation (B), the practice of *validating festival* is two-fold: in confirming the LLGFF as *the* LGBTQ-film festival *[heroicizing/aggrandizing festival]* and in endorsing the importance and impact of the festival for LGBTQ communities and filmmakers *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival]*. A particular activity that centres the LLGFF as *the* premier LGBTQ-film festival is the imbuing of festival literature and artefacts with a sense of the festival lineage. This is further cemented in special events which *preserv[e the] history and tradition* of the festival. Indeed, its community roots have not been forgotten and serve a purpose in *validating festival*, as this participant proudly explains:

> *Once upon a time **it was grassroots. It was the community** that actually made this festival happen.*[93] *[...] **There is a history of gay programming down here at the BFI** [...] **right from the 70s.** Like in 1977 there was the first strand of gay films looking at that world and that's because there were people in the organisation [BFI] that were gay themselves but also were film buffs and wanted to bring that out.*
>
> (Participant 2)

Furthermore, the value of the LLGFF for festival communities is endorsed through the repeated use of hyperbolic rhetoric *[heroicizing/aggrandising festival]*. An interesting example of *validating festival* in such a manner is the site-based peculiarity of referring to the LLGFF as 'gay Christmas' (multiple participants).

The practice of *validating festival* is manifest in vocal endorsements of the LLGFF. However, it is crucial to look beyond these accounts of the festival's significance to the mechanisms by which the validity and position of the LLGFF is

[93] Many of those involved in the early years of what has come to be known as the LLGFF were community activists or heavily involved with LGBTQ community organisations outwith their role with the BFI (Participant 1).

recursively reproduced. The association of the LLGFF and the BFI is a fundamental facet of validation *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries]*, particularly with regard to the artistic interpretation (A) and professionalism (C) of the festival. An associated mechanism in *validating festival* is the perception of commonalities shared between the (specialist) LLGFF and the (non-specialist) BFI LFF. Numerous participants utilise the branding and esteem of the LFF to position the LLGFF as on a par with major mainstream international film festivals: artistically, professionally, and in terms of prestige/renown. Notably, as practices are moulded by exogenous factors such as shared rules and norms, the meaning-making, identity-forming and order-producing practice of *validating festival* is shaped by shared understandings of validating 'criteria' such as occupancy rates. Crucially, the LLGFF carries differential meaning for a diverse assortment of individuals and community-groups and, therefore, there are multiple measures of 'success' and validation. It is through the practice of *validating festival* that these differing conceptualisations become manifest and individuals engage in a contextual anchoring of the festival. In fact, as will be discussed later, the purported aims and successes of each 'version' of the festival jar and are at times even mutually exclusive or at the very least incompatible *[5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*.

BENCHMARKING/DIFFERENTIATING FESTIVAL

While comparisons drawn between the LFF and LLGFF serve a role in *validating festival*, comparisons with other LGBTQ-film/arts festivals serve, rather, to differentiate the LLGFF and illuminate its purported position as a model of 'best-practice' within the queer-film-festival circuit.

In distinguishing the festival from other (UK-based) LGBTQ-arts/cultural/film festivals, overt differences such as the scale and longevity of the festival are often highlighted in promotional materials. Furthermore, individuals habituated to the organisation of queer arts/cultural events are in a position to cast light upon more implicit differences that are less apparent to the outsider such as the quality of industry provision (Participant 9), as this excerpt also highlights: 'it's got this **amazing**

infrastructure and staff behind it. [...] **Other queer arts festivals** wouldn't necessarily have that kind of **professionalism** or **resources**' (Participant 5). In fact, some participants went so far as to attribute the continued prominence and success of the LLGFF to this key differentiator: the infrastructure provided via the BFI *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries]*, as this excerpt shows: 'I wonder if the film festival **would have** [...] **been able to grow in the way it has done,** over time, if it didn't have that backing [...] by the BFI, **if it was completely or primarily community-led and organised**' (Participant 8). Although some participants alluded to the constraining forces of 'institutionalisation', this infrastructure is clearly valuable. An illustration of its potential becomes visible when the widely-distributed thirty-eight page glossy A4 LLGFF programme is juxtaposed with the marketing materials of a smaller community-based festival such as 'Fringe!' (shown overleaf in Figure 23), whom, in fact, do not actually provide print copies of their programme. Furthermore, the below Figure 22 illustrates the scale of partnerships that support the LLGFF. This stands in stark contrast to the comparative dearth of sponsors and partners available to most community-based film festivals (e.g. as shown in Figure 23 overleaf).

Figure 22: Image from LLGFF print programme (BFI, 2012c: 4)

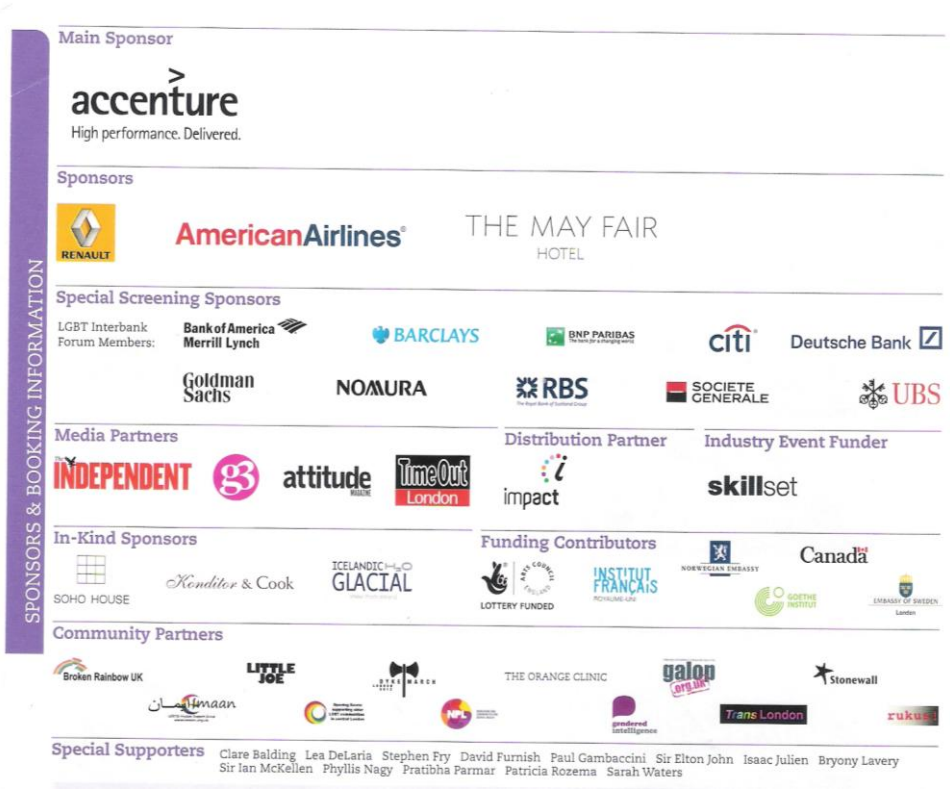


Figure 23: Collection of images relating to 'Fringe!'[94]

[94] Images indicating: 2012 'Fringe!' (A) partnerships, (B) transience, (C) physical marketing materials (table-top postcards and badges, marketing was principally conducted via social media) and (D) 2011 community origins. Image A is from a PDF copy of the 'Fringe!' 2012 programme; all other images taken from the 'Fringe!' Facebook account (open to the public), see <https://www.facebook.com/fringefest>.

Further to differentiating the LLGFF from other (UK-based) queer arts festivals, a key mechanism in positioning the festival is favourable comparison with the wider international LGBTQ-film-festival circuit. Underpinning the LLGFF's purported status as a benchmark of queer-film festival excellence are the constituent systems and processes of programming.[95] One participant drew attention to a failure of these systems at another festival: 'One festival had a trans short in it that was deemed **highly offensive by the trans community**. And the programmer revealed that **he hadn't actually watched it.** He felt it sounded right so he just put it in the programme!' (Participant 1). The LLGFF holds a position as a benchmark of high-brow artistic queer-film programming *[festivals networking]*. Crucially, in 'showcasing the best in new queer cinema'[96] the festival is committed to both *maintaining multiplicity* (of film mediums, genres, audiences etc.) and the pursuit of filmic excellence. Other festivals, by comparison, are critiqued for overwhelmingly bowing to populist demands, as this excerpt highlights: '**Some festivals seem to go for the lowest common denominator**. Any film with two half-naked boys or two half-naked girls and a bit of narrative seems to be good enough for them' (Participant 1). However, this deviation is also observed at the LLGFF by industry stakeholders, as this excerpt shows: 'it's **not the work of an auteur**. It has its **limitations**... but it's a kind of film that a general audience love' (Participant 11). Notably, several participants openly questioned how other festivals could maintain multiplicity when programming processes introduced arbitrary scoring systems that could potentially preclude diverse filmic tastes and see films catering for sub-cultures fall through the net (Participants 1, 4; Field-diary – informal conversation with Participant 3).[97]

Further to the practice of *validating festival* (whether as conceptualisation A, B or C), a key mechanism in positioning the LLGFF within a wider industry context is the expression of divergences and positive comparisons between the festival and other LGBTQ-film/arts festivals. Through its enactment this practice has an order-producing

[95] The LLGFF's role as a 'tastemaker' is further explored in 4.1.
[96] LLGFF tagline (BFI, 2012a)
[97] The LLGFF utilises a programming system whereby group programming decisions are based upon an individual 'sponsor' of a film *[2.1 Justifying Decision-Making]*. However, some film festivals, such as VinoKino, utilise a scoring system whereby films are graded by a group of programmers and, for instance, only those with the highest average score are screened and any film receiving the lowest point on the scale by an individual programmer is automatically excluded.

function and plays a role in legitimising the festival, whether positioned as a pinnacle of professionalism (C) or of artistic film excellence (A). Whilst the activity of comparison may be self-apparent, this practice is only meaningfully accomplished by encultured agents with access to specialist knowledge and an habituation to the shared standards and objectives associated with queer-film and -arts festivals. Ultimately, this practice expresses the larger and more enduring structures within which the festival operates and, in positioning the LLGFF as a benchmark of excellence, firmly locates the LLGFF as a legitimate realm within the wider LGBTQ-film/arts terrain.

HEROICIZING/AGGRANDISING FESTIVAL

While *benchmarking/differentiating festival* relates primarily to legitimising the LLGFF by positioning it as exemplary of both professional (C) and high-brow (A) festivalship, the practice of *heroicizing/aggrandising festival* is most notably manifest with regard to the community-centred conceptualisation of the festival (B).[98]

As previously discussed, in the absence of geographical centres of queer culture and heritage the LLGFF plays an important role in *constructing community space [connecting communities]*. As may be expected, festival promotional and marketing materials stress the importance of the LLGFF for queer communities, positioning the festival as a 'highlight of the LGBT calendar' and a 'celebratio[n] of queer creativity' (BFI Press Release - BFI, 2012g). Despite the brevity of the festival, the researcher does not dispute that the LLGFF has some form of cultural impact both within the queer population and to outsiders. However, the below excerpt highlights the hyperbolic statements that often accompany descriptions of the relationship between the ten-day festival and queer populations: 'it's a **really core part of our culture in London**' (Participant 9). This sentiment is also echoed in official reports: 'the **special atmosphere and environment created by the festival** [...] is **not found anywhere else** / The festival **gives inspiration and hope** / This festival **impacts upon gay culture**'

[98] This sub-section will focus upon LGBTQ communities. Heroicizing/aggrandising of the festival's impact with regards to queer-filmmaking communities will be instead explored in *pursuing own interests* (see 2.2) and 4.1.

(*Official Report regarding the Town Hall Session on the future of the LLGFF* - BFI, 2011e).

Furthermore, perhaps due to the historical circumstances that have moulded the LLGFF through time *[1.1 Preserving History and Tradition]*, an essence of symbolic heroism imbues both conceptualisations and descriptions of the festival. Numerous participants alluded to the 'powers' of the LLGFF in working for the 'greater good' against our shared queer 'adversaries' such as heteronormativity and discrimination *[contesting ownership]*. The below excerpt further illuminates this:

> ***It's having a long-term effect on this** area. The Southbank as a whole now **feels more queer-friendly because of the success of the festival** each year. I feel completely able to walk along the Southbank with my girlfriend, and **not be worried that we are going to have any negative comments**. **I honestly think that's because of the way that we transform this space for one week of the year**.*
>
> (Participant 2)

The enactment of this practice is not limited to those with strong ties to the festival but is also apparent in media produced by 'outsiders' ranging from stakeholder organisations (e.g. queer media publication DIVA) to groups/individuals with an interest in queer arts or activism. For instance, overt manifestations of this shared heroicizing impulse were evident in a multitude of queer media articles and in the Twitter-feed linked to the hashtag '#LLGFF' (comprising both individual and organisational posts), during the run-up to and the period of the festival.

In examining the enactment of *heroicizing/aggrandising festival*, it is, however, relevant to highlight the discrepancies between the purported and tangible reach of the impact of the LLGFF upon both queer communities and the wider populace. As will be further discussed later in this sub-section, direct involvement is limited to those who can attend the festival. Firstly, this is delimited by geography and also by disposable income (tickets cost between £6 and £16). Secondly, priority booking is only available to BFI members (subject to an annual membership fee of £42) and many screenings sell out before sales are opened to the general public. Although attendance at the LLGFF is, arguably, the preserve of an encultured and financially-secure audience *[questioning/*

criticising festival], the wider impact and legacy of the festival upon queer culture and the general public are not disputed here. However, as an individual with a long-standing involvement in queer advocacy and interest in queer cultures/histories but, crucially, a non-London resident, the heroicizing/aggrandising of the festival's impact was, perhaps, more jarring to the researcher. In general, these discrepancies are discernible but, nevertheless, the widespread practice of *heroicizing/aggrandising festival* prevails regardless. Conceivably, at a time of uncertainty for the future of the festival, aggrandising and heroicizing the impact of the LLGFF were not only necessary by-products of the moment *[answering back]* but also a key mechanism in legitimising the festival in positioning it as *the* LGBTQ community festival *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival]*. Furthermore, the enactment of this practice serves to reaffirm the very foundations upon which the aforementioned legacy of the LLGFF rests *[1.1 Preserving History and Tradition]*.

Validating festival, *benchmarking/differentiating festival* and *heroicizing/ aggrandising festival* are key in legitimising the LLGFF by contextually anchoring the festival and positioning it in a favourable light. On the other hand, the practices discussed below — *questioning/criticising* festival and *recognising limitations* — serve to simultaneously reflect critically upon the perceptions of and legitimacy of the LLGFF.

QUESTIONING/CRITICISING FESTIVAL

Throughout observation periods at the festival, online monitoring (of official and public comments on community, media and social-networking sites[99]), and my own position as an observer-as-participant during the festival, I encountered surprisingly little overt criticism of the festival as a whole. However, formal interviews and informal discussions with festival *staff* (including programmers) revealed unease regarding several aspects of the festival. Given the propensity for the festival's myriad stakeholders/aims to experience a clash or incongruity in which aspects of the festival

[99] See section 4.3 of Chapter III for a comprehensive list.

are valued, some criticisms related to matters of personal choice. For instance, participant five suggested that the LLGFF was 'not queer enough' and the programme did not sufficiently explore issues relating to queer identities/politics *[contesting ownership; (not) recognising stakeholders]*.

A notable and, for me, unexpected criticism related to the practices of programming itself, as this excerpt highlights: 'there is a very professional *core* to the festival **but** I think **the programming side is maybe not… on this festival... a big focus**' (Participant 1). Three of the four programmers interviewed voiced reservations regarding the compressed time-frame[100] for viewing and selecting film-material, as the below excerpt and below Figure 24 illuminate:

> ***We work on a very, very tight schedule*** *[...]* ***<u>we are essentially only watching films for like a month</u>*** *[...] then we write copy, then programmes go off to be printed [...] it's a* ***really short amount of time that we're actually putting together what our programme is***.
>
> (Participant 4)

Key Dates		
2011	12th July	26th Festival announced
	16th Dec	Deadline for submissions
2012	9th Feb	Opening Night Gala film announced
	23rd Feb	**LLGFF Press Launch and programme unveiled**
	24th Feb	Competitions begin
	1st March	**Members' Priority Booking opens**
		Members' Ballot for Opening and Closing Night Gala opens
	6th March	Festival 'preview video trailer' posted online
	7th March	Members' Ballot results revealed
	8th March	**Public Booking opens [several films/events sold out]**
	20th March	Club Nights announced
	23rd March	**LLGFF begins with 'Opening Night Gala'**
	24th March	'Best of Fest' announced
	1st April	LLGFF ends with 'Closing Night Gala'

Figure 24: Key LLGFF 2012 dates

The deadline for film submissions was 16 December 2011, the final proof of programmes was sent for printing in January and the programme was unveiled on 23 February 2012.

The above sentiment of apprehension shone through the cracks in the part-time contracted *[5.1 Establishing Individual Boundaries]* programmers' otherwise prevalent endorsement of their work.

More pointed criticism emerged regarding the ways in which the experienced festival did not match with conceptualisations underlying the practice of *validating festival*. In contrast to a high-brow film festival (A), the below example highlights how the artistic merit of film as art-form may not be the only lure for attendees: 'it's super **cruisy**! Everyone comes out in their glad-rags and **it's a bit of a free for all**... **With the best will in the world, that's what it is**! There's hundreds of gays around the building going "oooh" and picking people up' (Participant 4). Furthermore, perceived violation of the shared rules and norms of a community-centred festival (e.g. *reaching out* and catering for the widest range of LGBTQ individuals possible) is manifest in one of the most widespread criticisms of the LLGFF: cost. As participant four explains:

> *We get a slightly more diverse group of people than the people that normally come to the BFI.* ***But it's mostly people who have some... money****. That's* ***the prohibitive thing*** *about the festival,* ***it is expensive to come****.* ***You have to buy tickets*** *[...] I guess we get people who are* ***students and above****, you know... We get the Guardian readers, the Independent readers. We don't get a lot of clubbers, unless they are more your esoteric clubber.*

A further perceived violation relates to the failure of the LLGFF to genuinely involve the community members that it aspires to reach out to *[cultivating communities; reaching out; (re)defining scope]*, illuminated in this historical criticism articulated by a community member-turned-programmer:

> *When I first came I thought it was* ***very elitist and snooty*** *and I used to think that the* ***programmers sort of walked round with these clipboards****...* ***I never felt part of it****. I always* ***felt like I was a punter****. And* ***I always felt like there was some 'thing' going on that I wasn't part of****. I used to get really angry about it. I'd say "I feel like my tickets are subsidising all these people doing something".*
>
> (Participant 3)

The most evident criticism directed at the LLGFF relates to a flaw of infrastructure. A recurring thorn in the side of the professional conceptualisation of the festival (C) is the booking system. An annual online diatribe follows the frenzied

scramble for tickets when BFI Members' priority booking opens. The experience of the researcher — online booking system crashing, calling and waiting on hold for an extended period of time, and even the payments system shutting down for several hours — was widespread. Frustration regarding the booking system and, as already discussed, the limited availability of tickets for non-BFI Members was vented both in LGBTQ online communities and LLGFF social-media channels, a forum where festival organisers/'the BFI' could be directly challenged *[answering back]*.

Diametrically opposed to the averred professionalism (C), community-centred nature (B) and commitment to artistic excellence (A) that reverberates throughout interview and promotional materials, the above excerpts illuminate a gulf between the (idealised) conceptualisations of the LLGFF underpinning *validating festival* and the lived experience itself. However, it is by healthy engagement with awareness of festival shortcomings (that become manifest through the enactment of this practice) that the LLGFF can evolve with agility and continue to serve its constituent communities *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival; 5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*. Evidently the practice of *questioning/criticizing festival* plays an inescapable year-on-year order-producing role in *positioning festival*. Simultaneously, it also has a meaning-making role within the narrative of enduring yet ever-modulating conceptualisations of the LLGFF. In turn, this pervasive practice plays an indubitable role in *legitimising* the festival.

RECOGNISING LIMITATIONS

The enactment of the LLGFF relies upon a significant volume of gifted labour. Volunteers form a large contingent of the LLGFF workforce; their energetic omnipresence was palpable during fieldwork observation and the crucial nature of their contribution was articulated throughout interviews with festival staff. Furthermore, staff expressed a firm sense of the goodwill and self-sacrifice required on the volunteers' part in order to secure the successful execution of each festival iteration, as this excerpt illustrates: 'it's a strange mixture of amateur and professional practice … that puts the

festival together I think. And **self-exploitation** [laughs] and … just **the will to make it work**' (Participant 1). Thus, the LLGFF is reliant upon continued altruism, which, in part, stems from the perceived validity and legitimacy of the festival and, indeed, may falter without continued due recognition of this self-sacrifice.

Bound by a commitment to showcase 'the best in new queer cinema' but also to cater for LGBTQ [sub-/]communities, programmers walk a narrow line in balancing programme content in order to satisfy multiple stakeholders with divergent expectations *[maintaining multiplicity; representing communities]*. However, a widely-perceived crucial limitation in achieving these aims is a shortfall of high-calibre material, illustrated in the excerpt below:

> ***With digital technology there are many more people making films*** *[...] There is no shortage of material. But,* ***what there is, is a real shortage of quality filmmaking.*** *People think you can just pick up a camera and start making a film. It's just not the case.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Furthermore, in interviews both current and former programmers noted an increased necessity to compromise in order to cater for particular sub-cultures or to include certain film-genres, given that relevant quality film-production is proportionately scarcer still. For instance, a historically contingent example is that trans documentaries are *now* relatively common however, a dearth of trans feature-films often means that there is not a luxury of choice for this category *[2.2 Justifying Decision-Making]*. As will be further noted in 4.1 and 5.2, this is compounded further still by an unwillingness on the part of some filmmakers and/or distributors to delimit the exposure of a high-quality film by labelling it as a 'genre film' through inclusion in a 'specialist-interest' film festival.

The enactment of *recognising limitations* is possible through recourse to shared understandings of objectives, expectations and group-norms. Whilst the activity of this practice makes use of such resources, it also expresses larger and more enduring exogeneous features, such as the prevalent marginalisation and invisibility of LGBTQ sub-cultures. In *recognising limitations* — the factors that may curb the LLGFF's activities or result in a deviation from idealised conceptualisations/aims — and acting

upon such insights, it is possible to erode such extant structures. For instance, in order to combat the discussed shortfall of high-calibre material pertaining to certain sub-cultures the LLGFF holds networking events (i.e. the trans-filmmaking networking event). Furthermore, the LLGFF runs an 'Education and Industry' strand of events (i.e. the *Skillset* supported *Now We Are Here: Professional Development for Filmmakers*) and, under the banner of *Future Film at the LLGFF*, supports screenings and workshops for novice filmmakers *[propagating industry]*. An interesting instance of the success of the LLGFF in combating a 'shortage of quality filmmaking' will be further elaborated upon in 3.1 (see pages 206-210). Far from binding the activities and renown of the LLGFF, it is in *recognising limitations* that steps can be taken to attempt to assuage such factors and further consolidate a narrative of continuity in *positioning festival* and *legitimising* both the LLGFF and LGBTQ filmmaking.

In summary, the initial practices explored in this sub-section provide frames for understanding some of the order-producing, identity-forming and meaning-making mechanisms by which the standing and renown of the LLGFF, in each of its guises, is reproduced (across iterations). Similarly, the latter practices further serve to position the LLGFF by shedding light upon (and acknowledging) the ways in which the festival cannot fulfil all of the multiple and at times mutually-exclusive criteria for its 'success' (given the plurality of conceptualisations). These latter practices also suggest ways in which the festival could improve or adapt (to better serve one conceptualisation over another). These five practices ultimately work in tandem to contextually anchor and *position* the LLGFF, and to illuminate the relationships between it, constituent communities and other film festivals.

2.2 - JUSTIFYING DECISION-MAKING

This category comprises four practices — *evaluating film*, *recognising stakeholders*, *pursuing own interests* and *strategizing and avoiding risk* — discussed below, which are enacted in justifying both individual and collective decision-making and, therefore, legitimising the choices that have shaped each festival iteration. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these four practices are shown in Figure 25 overleaf.

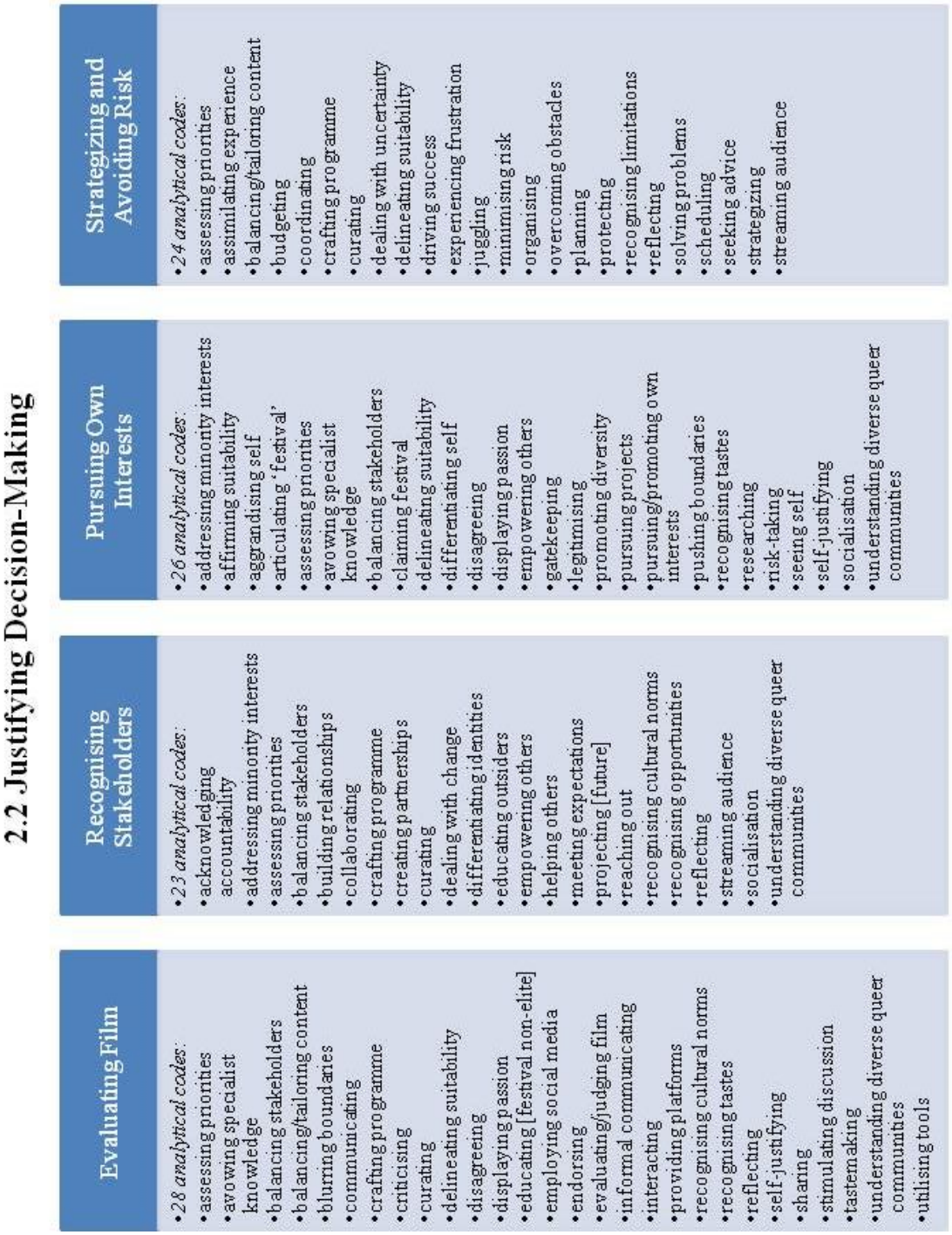
EVALUATING FILM:
FESTIVAL WIDE PRACTICE; CRITICAL FACET OF PROGRAMMING

A practice enacted almost universally — although with varying skill, expertise, reason, outcome and impact — is the appraisal of film. Agents receive visual and aural sensible impressions from film, which are perceived and aesthetically judged according to experiences and tastes locally contingent to the individual. This pre-reflexive sensible knowledge becomes manifest in the act of *evaluating film* and is apparent in interviews. When describing a film, participants frequently reverted to hyperbolic emotive language (e.g. 'adore', 'hate', 'stunning', 'love', 'beautiful', 'striking', 'gorgeous' etc.), exaggerated exclamations (e.g. 'Oh my God!') and overstated verbal fillers (for instance, 'oh!...' or 'wow!...'). For both cinephiles and lay-persons, this is also evident in reflections upon their general relationship with film (in instances ranging from conversations and Q&A discussions to formal interviews), as the below excerpt shows:

> ***I do love mood cinema, visceral cinema****... something that just* ***looks gorgeous****, and has* ***a fantastic soundtrack*** *and the* ***costumes are amazing****. That's what I* ***love****. [...]* ***I love Sophia Coppola's films***[101] *and her films are not that strong on storyline.* ***I love the aesthetics of her cinema****. I can appreciate that aspect as*

[101] Director of, for instance, *The Virgin Suicides* (1999), *Lost in Translation* (2003), and *Marie Antoinette* (2006).

Figure 25: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Justifying Decision-Making'



well as, for instance, an amazing script.

(Participant 12)

The activity of this practice is, however, shaped by several circumstantial, individual, endogenous and exogenous factors. Firstly, the viewing milieu can impact upon the experience of film in many ways but most notably through prior impressions (i.e. from 'copy'[102]) and the phenomena of *experiencing [film] collectively*. Secondly, individual participation is differentiated according to experiences, tastes, engagement with other practices (i.e. activist, cinephile) and tacit know-how of queer cinema criticism. Thirdly, artefacts such as shared objectives *[recognising stakeholders]* and group norms (i.e. of what constitutes 'strong production values' or 'good cinematography') enable and limit the outcome of this practice *[strategising and avoiding risk]*. Finally, extant wider political and cultural concerns and trends mould this practice by shifting parameters of film 'worth' and, ultimately, community receptiveness. For instance, the below excerpt highlights the layered narrative of in-vogue LGBTQ cinematic concerns:

> *We love innovation and originality. We love a good story well told, we love discovering something new... **There are certain tropes that re-appear again and again in gay cinema**: the 'coming out story', the nightlife odyssey, the rom-com. And, **they kind of go in waves**: the documentary about putting on a gay pride parade, gay marriage... If I never see another documentary about gay marriage I'll be happy!*

(Participant 1)

Of most direct significance to the festival is, arguably, the act of *evaluating film* by programmers during the period of film selection. Two notable aspects of the enactment of this practice (and development of the LLGFF programme) by the collective cohort of programmers can be traced through the interviews. Firstly, the participants shared an awareness and appreciation of each others' cinematic tastes, interests and engagement with sub-cultures *[pursuing own interests]*, as the below excerpt illustrates:

[102] See *strategizing and avoiding risk* (2.2) for a discussion of the importance of the impressions conveyed in 'copy'.

> *We've been a team for four years so **we know what is likely to be chosen by someone else**. X knows when she's watching a certain film **"That's a Y film!"**. [...] Usually it's women in tight vests! [laughs] Or **something a little bit more irreverent than what she would programme**. **We have a very different eye**. Whilst that's not to say that I won't programme something with a serious subject matter, I do tend to go for the popular...the rom-com, the coming out story...*
>
> (Participant 2)

Secondly, an instinctive desire to share a film with a wider audience is an oft-cited initial reaction to those films that are eventually included in the final programme. The below excerpt illuminates this drive:

> *The first time I saw 'Orchids'[103] I just thought "Oh my God!" and **I started thinking about all the people that I wanted to tell, that I wanted to see** it. [...] Today, when I saw 'Love Free or Die'[104] I was straight away thinking about **the people that I wanted to see that film** and that, to me, is **the biggest sign: if I want to share it!***
>
> (Participant 3)

Similarly, this drive is also common to festival attendees and, following their own enactment of *evaluating film*, some go on to share their impressions with the wider national LGBTQ populace via blogs and social media (e.g. posting comments on the LLGFF Facebook page, or 'tweeting' the LLGFF or relevant filmmaker's Twitter account).

Traversing the temporal bounds of the festival, *evaluating film* is performed and re-performed prior to, during and following the LLGFF. In devising the LLGFF programme, the enactment of this practice is inextricably linked to an overall balancing of content *[recognising stakeholders; representing communities]* and ever-shifting criteria of evaluation, and is mediated by the varied and complex engagement of knowledgeable agents. The centrality of the skilful enactment of *evaluating film* to *justifying decision-makin*g is two-fold. Firstly, the continual repositioning of programmers as 'knowledgeable agents' *[affirming suitability]* is utilised to endorse their capacity for appraising film and thus justify their decisions. However, secondly,

[103] *Orchids, My Intersex Adventure* (Dir: Hart; Australia, 2010).
[104] (Dir: Alston; USA, 2010).

the (re-)performance of this practice by both 'amateur' and cinephile festival attendees is crucial. The enactment of *evaluating film* by festival audiences generates a reaction to each screening that is a tributary channel to *justifying decision-making*. Audience reception is a salient gauge of programming success and a tepid response may undermine decision-making *[answering back]*. In turn, a rapturous collective plaudit by festival communities — of both individual films and the programme as a whole — indicates a fulfilment of duty to communities, justifies the programming decision-making underpinning the festival and legitimises the constituent conceptualisations of the LLGFF.

RECOGNISING STAKEHOLDERS:
PERCEPTION OF AND PROVISION FOR KEY GROUPS

The recognition of the *plurality* of LGBTQ sub-cultures as stakeholders, and its relationship to legitimising the LLGFF as a community festival, has already been outlined in this chapter.[105] Instead, discussion of *recognising stakeholders* will focus upon acknowledgement of and catering for those less immediately apparent. Participants made frequent reference to marginal stakeholder groups that are catered for to some degree, such as LGBTQ parents. However, of particular interest is reflection upon emergent and potential stakeholders *[(re)defining scope]*. Nascent fostering of relationships with prospective stakeholders *[reaching out]* is exemplified in the inaugural *Supporting LGBT Students* discussion event for teachers seeking to utilise LGBTQ film to support equality education, an idea proposed by a schoolteacher and LLGFF staff-member. Similarly, participants highlighted emergent groups that they believe it would be appropriate and fruitful to cater for, such as the demographic example of the 'next generation' previously mentioned in *cultivating communities* (1.2). As previously outlined, the formerly wide portfolio of Industry Services was omitted from the six-day 2011 festival.[106] However, recognition of its value to film-industry stakeholders and the LGBTQ-filmmaking community (and resulting centrality in

[105] See, in particular, *maintaining multiplicity* (1.4).
[106] See section 1 of Chapter III.

validating festival conceptualisations C and B) resulted in its 2012 reinstatement *[4.1 Professional Networking; answering back]*. Unique to this iteration was an assertive stance regarding the necessity to cater for such stakeholders, a provision that has been *safeguard[ed]* and continues to prevail in subsequent iterations.

Failure to adequately recognise the complexity of stakeholders beyond facile sub-culture classifications was also discussed by participants. Crucially, the myriad nature of festival stakeholders and their complex multi-layered relationships with conceptualisations of the LLGFF must be recognised in the collective 'decision-making' that underlies the festival. The below excerpt illustrates the importance of avoiding generalisations or assumptions regarding stakeholder interests:

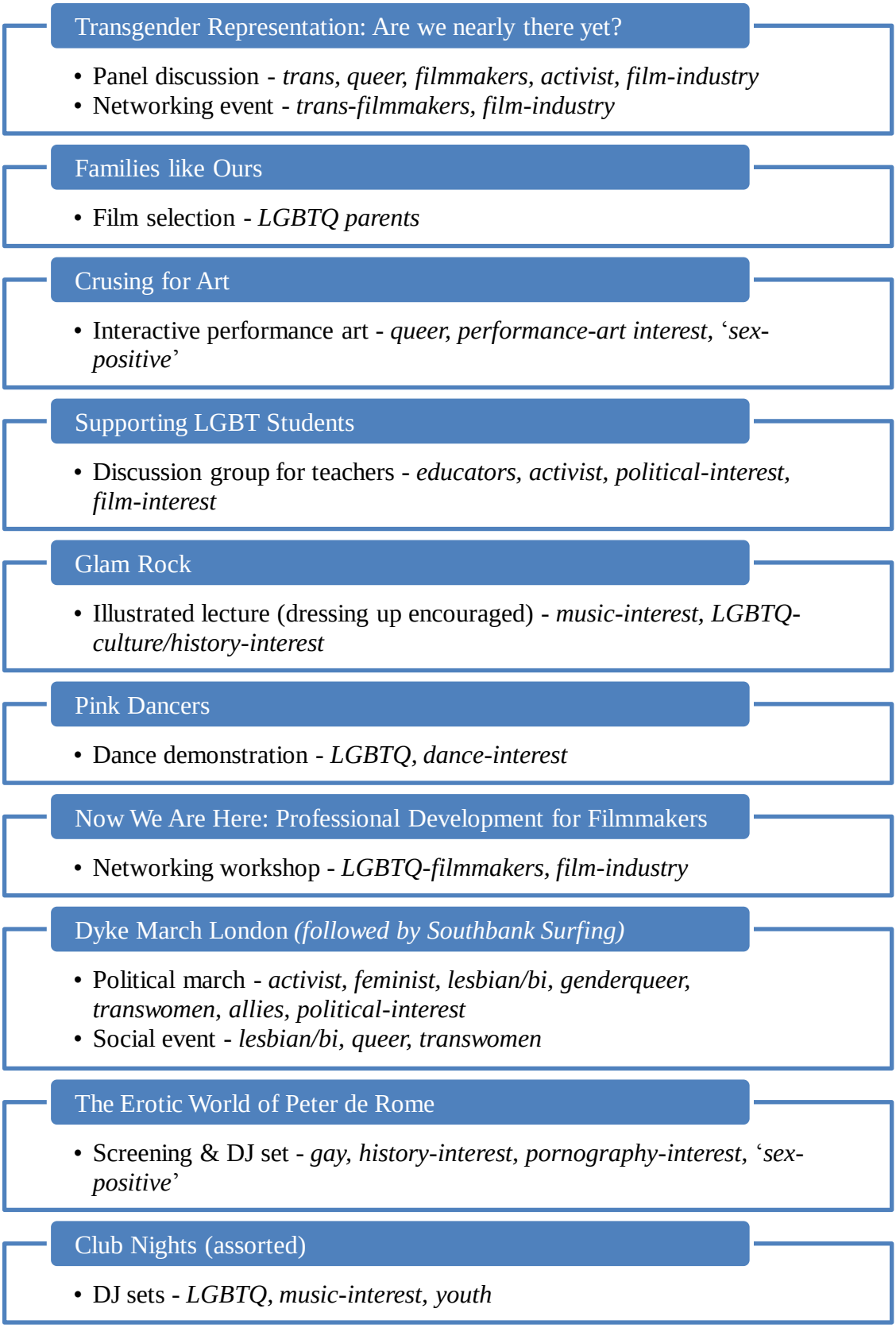
> *This year the programme is quite '**populist**' but **that is something that needs serving**. [...] **Just because they are queer doesn't mean they are necessarily interested in** experimental film or edgy porn-y erotica. They may want to see a really easy rom-com... they are more interested in perhaps just representation than film.*
>
> (Participant 5)

Notably, irrespective of perceived or avowed specialist knowledge regarding queer cinema, politics and culture, it is socialisation to *recognising stakeholders* that was identified as key in the performance of this practice, as the below excerpt illuminates:

> *The first year I was much more hard-line, **"I'm putting in these really tough films and people have to watch them"**. Then... **I think you just learn as you go along** and you **understand the audience** more. It's very much about **understanding what the audience want**.*
>
> (Participant 12)

The outcome of the activity of *recognising stakeholders* is evident during the festival itself in the sheer diversity of: film programming, events, community partners, sponsors and industry provision. This becomes manifest in and can be traced through artefacts such as the printed programme. Moving beyond expected film audiences, consideration of the range of events, for instance, provides a particularly illustrative example of this practice outcome, as Figure 26 overleaf demonstrates. *Recognising stakeholders* is here understood as the perception of and provision for key festival

Figure 26: Sample of LLGFF events and delineation of some key interest groups



stakeholders; a process enhanced through agents' personal engagements with festival communities and socialisation *[blurring subjectivities]*. The perceived meaningful impact of this practice is a crucial thread in weaving together arguments to both support the decision-making that underlies each iteration of the LLGFF and also in *legitimising* the festival continuously through time in all its conceptualisations and thereby bolstering its longevity.

PURSUING OWN INTERESTS:
PROGRAMMERS AS SOCIALISED SUB-GENRE/CULTURE CHAMPIONS

Further to *evaluating film* and *recognising stakeholders*, a key mechanism in shaping the decision-making underpinning each iteration of the LLGFF is the pursuit of individual interests. Contrary to the espoused aura of close-knit collectivism, a measure of adherence to personal interests is, of course, prevalent. Observation of the composition of each audience makes clear that, despite some cross-over (particularly for films/events with a more universal theme, i.e. Christianity and same-sex love in *Love Free or Die*[107]), segmentation between principally 'L', 'G' and 'T' communities is clearly discernible in the respective footfall to each screening *[(failure of) connecting communities; engaging with stereotypes]*. Similarly, as touched upon in 2.1, the LGBTQ-film industry may withhold material that they believe may be more successful in a non-specialist festival.

Of most impact, however, are the personal concerns of key decision-makers such as festival programmers. Membership of and active engagement with a community sub-group or sub-culture were often articulated in interviews and voiced in public spaces during observation (i.e. film introductions). This is utilised to advocate a programmer's perceived position as an expert/specialist *[affirming suitability]* with privileged access to and a more sophisticated understanding of these stakeholders *[recognising stakeholders]*. As the following excerpts illuminate, it is from this

[107] Sundance award-winning documentary about (now retired) openly gay Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson (Dir: Macky Alston; USA, 2010).

connoisseur's platform — a key resource — that programmers are able to both seek out material relevant to their own interests and also to argue for and justify its inclusion, commensurate with their own idiosyncratic and multiple understandings of 'success' *[3.2 Positioning Self]*:

> ***I'm interested in work that is about the 'queerer' representation of women**. There are five programmers and **we all have our own interests**. X, who is the other sort of lesbian programmer, she's really interested in mainstream white women often, so she tends to programme things that will play really well in a mainstream audience. Then **I look more at punk representations or feminist representations of women**. In particular, **work that's about women of colour**, or tends to be a little bit more lo-fi[108], less well funded and a little less glossy.*
>
> (Participant 4)[109]

As previously outlined, programmers have an appreciation of the tastes and interests of their programming peers. As such, they will regularly direct material that they have received to the 'more appropriate' programmer. However, this relationship is one of mutual respect and one that can be violated *[guarding boundaries]*, as the below excerpt shows:

> *The truth is, if some really big trans film was released **I might feel a bit... funny if someone else said "I've seen this and I'm gonna [programme it]"**... I might feel a bit like "Oh, that's... funny" [said in an annoyed way].*
>
> (Participant 3)

The outcome of this practice is traceable during the festival through observation of who: leads each film introduction, conducts each Q&A session, attends each event and writes each piece of programming copy (although there are some 'surprises'). The activity of this practice is enabled by the freedom and autonomy granted to programmers, as Participant 4 goes on to explain: 'I think **we do get to indulge our interests a bit**. [...] There is a feeling that you can... if there's something that you are interested in, **no-one is going to stop you from doing it**'. However, its outcome is also

[108] 'Lo-fi' or 'low-fidelity' films are made with lower-quality sound/camera equipment, often purposely utilised for their unique aesthetic qualities or to achieve a 'vintage' feel.
[109] This participant is involved with queer/feminist-activist groups (i.e. *Dyke March*, *Unskinny Bop*, *Ladyfest* etc.), the 'riot girrl' [sic] music scene, queer cultural productions (i.e. the *Resist Psychic Death: DIY cultural production for queer community building* project), and also with Muslim LGBTQ groups and filmmakers.

delimited by the other related practices that collectively play a role in justifying the individual and wider decisions that shape each festival iteration (i.e. *strategizing and avoiding risk*). Nevertheless, the somewhat 'representative' programmers are generally not hampered in attempts to pursue their own interests (within the bounds of balancing content) and, indeed, in pushing boundaries (as the recent inclusion of queer feminist pornography, historical pornography and 'cruising' performance art exemplifies). Ultimately, this pursuit of individual interests: enables fruitful engagement with *recognising stakeholders*; contributes to *justifying decision-making* through continual re-positioning of programmers as a socialised sub-genre/culture champion; and reflects the manner in which multiple idiosyncratic measures of success are integrated and how the plurality of the festival is consolidated firmly within a shared *legitimising* organisational remit. Critically, the enactment of this practice relies upon and is enabled by particular group and societal norms broadly relating to aesthetic judgement and taste: artistic licence and trusted expertise.

STRATEGIZING AND AVOIDING RISK

> ***"I gave a little 'pep talk' saying that we had to be much more certain about a title [...], that we couldn't afford to have any failures. [...] We had to be more careful, I mean last year it was... it was make or break. We knew that we couldn't afford to let the festival take a wrong step. There was a lot of pressure"***
>
> *(Participant 1)*

As previously outlined in 2.1, targets (i.e. capacity statistics) are of imperative importance in: *legitimising* the LLGFF as professional; *safeguarding* its future; and, as the following excerpt shows, nurturing its relationship with a vital stakeholder, the BFI: '**we** want to **meet our targets** so that **we** can **prove that we are a success** and that **we should keep on doing what we are doing**' (Participant 2).[110] As the above epigraph shows, with a total capacity of around 750 over four screening venues of varying

[110] It is relevant to note here the use of the grammatical voice of the first person plural, 'we', given that this participant is also a full-time employee of the BFI in a different capacity *[blurring subjectivities]*.

sizes,[111] the strategic methods employed to maximise commercial viability were fundamental in 2012 following the 2011 cuts. For each film/event, the venue selection and schedule slot[/s] are subject to extensive discussion (various participants) for two reasons. One, there is an effort to cater for each main stakeholder group (L/G/T) during each festival timeslot and also to ensure a 'hidden trajectory' (Participant 1) so that, theoretically, each main interest group could go from venue to venue throughout the day. Secondly, gauging the capacity of a film to draw in an audience is a central aspect of strategizing. For instance, a film expected to attract a niche audience or less interest than an anticipated 'blockbuster' is allocated a smaller venue and less coveted time-slot.

Given that film is experiential, our prior impressions — and, therefore, purchase decisions — are formed on the basis of the information provided in promotional materials such as the programme and festival web presence. The purposeful inspection of copy coupled with audience observation can unveil the relationship between marketing materials and audience expectations. However, the importance of effective marketing in creating the 'right' expectations is firmly embedded in the consciousness of festival staff and industry stakeholders, as the following excerpts show. This programmer reveals how socialisation has influenced *strategizing and avoiding risk* in this context:

> ***What I've learned over the four years** is about **managing expectations**. [...] I've said "Film X is a quiet sensitive heartfelt film". **To me, that's a code**. I hope that from that people know what to expect and won't come out saying "we found it really slow and boring". [...] That's when people get critical about things. [...] So, **it's that thing of trying to tell people the truth about something.***
>
> (Participant 3)

This concern is shared by a film distributor, in relation to a different film, anxious to attract the appropriate (educated, cinephile) audience and safeguard the reputation and future proliferation of the film:

> *We had quite a few discussions with them [LLGFF] about Film Y before we consented to it actually being in the festival... But they did handle it right. So*

[111] Festival capacity: NFT1 (450), NFT2 (150), NFT3 (134) and Studio (38). Furthermore, the main bar offers additional capacity of 450 and exclusive industry events had a capacity of 350 across two venues.

> *that was fine. But **it could have very easily been handled incorrectly** and... **that would have been bad for the film**. If the **wrong audience** had gone in they would have been coming out saying bad things about it. And we want to avoid that.*
>
> (Participant 11)

LLGFF staff and industry stakeholders temper the desire to maximise the exposure of and attendance at a film with a degree of transparency in order to avoid dashing the expectations of audiences and, potentially, alienating them.

Each festival iteration is subject to rigorous strategizing with regards to timetabling, (managing) audience expectations and also *recognising stakeholders*. However, unpredictability of audiences and both internal and external stakeholders can produce unanticipated strains upon the *justifi[cation of festival] decision-making*. For instance, the below excerpt illustrates an example of a disparity between historic perceptions (based upon genre and content-interest assumptions) underlying decision-making and the festival reality:

> *We all loved the documentary but **we didn't think it had the legs to go into the 'big cinema'** [NFT1] but it sold out [the smaller Studio and NFT3] incredibly quickly. I think because **it was about an activist campaign and activists were using Twitter and Facebook to talk to each other, creating a frenzy** of more people wanting to see the film. **So, we put it in 'Best of the Fest'** and it sold out [... a screening in NFT2, 150 seats], just *snaps fingers* like that!*
>
> (Participant 1)

This excerpt also highlights the importance of recognising 'mistakes' and learning from or remedying them, for instance through the remedial opportunity proffered by the 'Best of the Fest' *[answering back]*. Experience and socialisation are the bedrock to the successful collective enactment of this practice. Furthermore, the incorporation of understanding gleaned from the ever-constant loop of recognising mistakes, *strategizing and avoiding risk* ultimately keeps agile and *justf[ies the] decision-making* upon which mechanisms of *legitimising* rely.

The four practices explored above enable appreciation of the order-producing channels that mould the crafting of the LLGFF programme and, therefore, ultimately shape the festival itself. Through consideration of these practices, this sub-section illuminates in particular how decision-making is justified by a prominent cohort of festival staff; one key element in a wider complex web of decision-making groups and processes that interpenetrate and collectively play a part in *legitimising* the LLGFF.

2.3 - ADVOCATING (CONTINUED) VALUE OF FESTIVAL

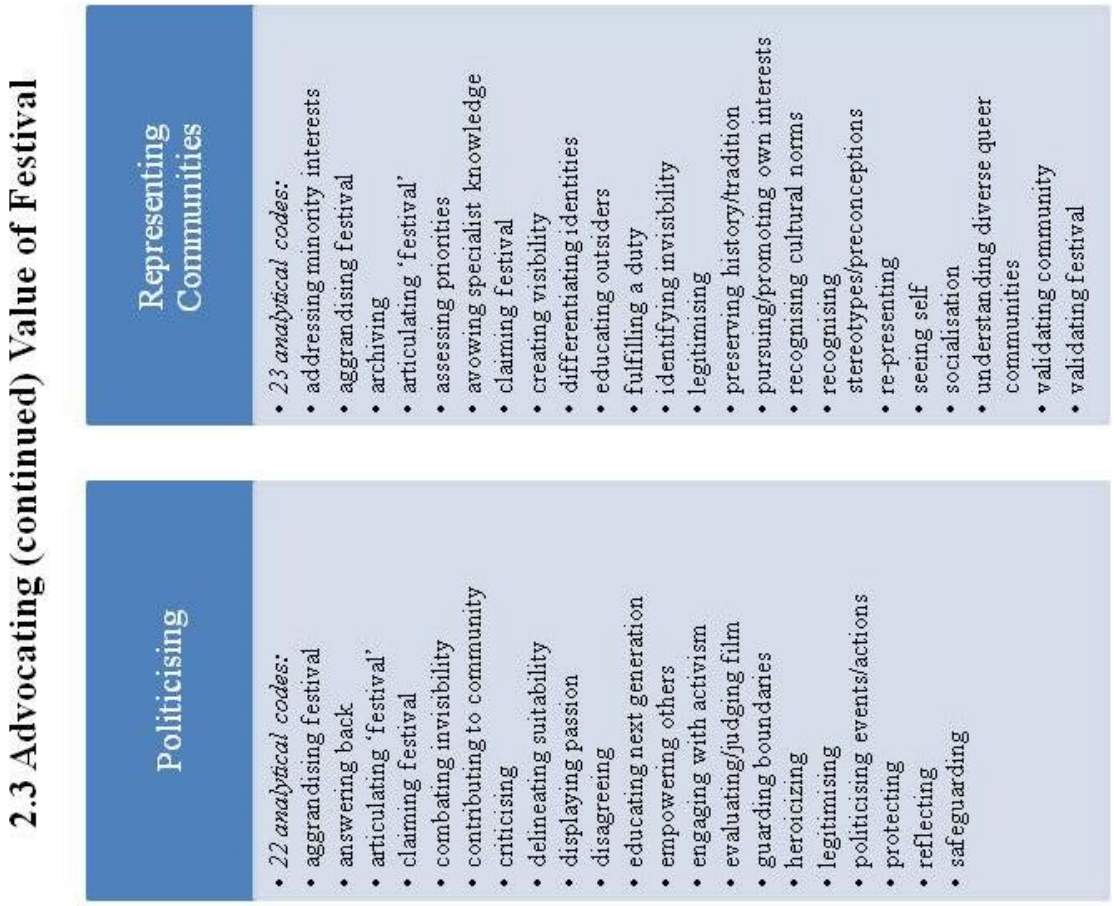
This category comprises two practices — *politicising* and *representing communities* — discussed below, which serve to confirm the continued need for and value of the LLGFF to LGBTQ communities, sub-cultures and filmmakers. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these two practices are shown in Figure 27 overleaf.

POLITICISING:
COMMUNITY, FESTIVAL AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

As previously outlined in 2.2 (see 'Evaluating Film'), extant cultural and political concerns of queer communities, both locally and globally, shape the practices that are enacted in the processes of programme development. These ever-evolving concerns are (gradually) reflected in the content-trends of LGBTQ cinema. As an organisation supposedly at the forefront of queer culture/cinema, the LLGFF has value in its propensity towards showcasing material (and events) of currency that reflects burgeoning and contemporary political concerns (within bounds elaborated upon in 2.2). This is, of course, dependent upon decision-makers' socialisation to and understanding of queer political concerns *[affirming suitability]*.

The following excerpt describes the approaching expiration of a thematic shelf-life: 'The baby story is another one at the moment! [...] **it may have been radical a few years ago but now it's not particularly interesting. It's not news** [...]. **I'm not sure we <u>need</u> to see another film about it**' (Participant 1). It is relevant to note how this quote sits alongside previous quotes that convey a sense of the 'need' of and for attendees to see films exploring particular themes or *remembering* our collective past. In a similar vein, during numerous film introductions audiences were invited to consider an equality disparity — both across time and globally — that invoked a *remembering* of

Figure 27: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Advocating (continued) Value of Festival'



our shared histories and *politicising* of audiences through education. Notably, where appropriate, there was a resulting general sense of unease and humble acknowledgement from individuals viewing from a privileged position in the present day (Field-diary – numerous Q&A sessions), indeed from the comfort of an expensive BFI seat in the cultural hubbub of the cosmopolitan Southbank. A further example of note is the inclusion of the independently-organised *Dyke March* (in itself a revival of the lesbian–strength marches of the 1980s) in the festival programme, demonstrating a *politicising* of the festival through *reaching out* to activist groups (see Figure 28 below):

Figure 28: Photograph of 'Dyke March', en route to official end point at the BFI

"LLGFF are thrilled that the tradition has been revived" (LLGFF Programme – BFI, 2012c: 31)

As previously outlined in 2.1 and 2.2, outwith or beyond an amorphous fluid 'scene' and ever-evolving 'communities', the LLGFF offers a crystallised fixed-point of connection to engage with our shared histories and cultures. The politicised historical value of the festival as a heroic visible anchor of queer cultures in an otherwise desolate mainstream terrain is widely accepted by the queer populace.[112] The below excerpt from

[112] Although the inaugural festival *Gays Own Pictures* took place in 1986, its history can be traced beyond this to the 1977 *Images of Homosexuality* season presented by Richard Dyer. It is pertinent to consider here the wider social and political backdrop within which the LLGFF lineage can be traced:

an interview with the youngest participant shows recognition of both the historical and current value of the festival to queer communities:

> ***Before the internet, it was the main way that gays understood each other's experiences. Gay filmmaking and communicating the gay experience through films has a really long and important tradition.*** *[...] [Now, filmmakers] are always looking for platforms so certainly in a business way there's a need. But I think in a political way* ***it's always important to have ways to reflect your experience in a cultural way****.*
>
> (Participant 13)

However, given the extent of 'progress' in the journey towards legal equality, social acceptance and cultural integration (e.g. lesbian/gay characters are now relatively common in mainstream television/film), questions have been raised in numerous corners regarding the 'necessity' of a specialist queer-film festival in the present day UK. Furthermore, in the modern hyper-connected age those seeking out queer communities and cultures have greater capacity to do so online via dedicated queer community-websites, corporate queer-media sites, social-media groups/accounts etc. Nevertheless, there is a palpable sense of the politicised and politicising desire for the festival's continued existence and value as a nexus of queer culture.

This sense pervaded all interviews and is symbolised in the widespread call-to-arms that followed the announcement of large cuts to the 2011 LLGFF, which resulted in the pop-up 'Fringe!' queer-film/arts festival[113] during the 'absent' second week of the 2011 LLGFF. Furthermore, contrary to the recent much-celebrated commercial and critical success of 'Hollywood' films that centre around a lesbian or gay storyline, there

---

homosexual sexual acts were not decriminalised until 1967 (1980 in Scotland); at the outbreak of the crisis in 1982, AIDS was initially called 'Gay-Related Immune Deficiency' (and even termed the 'gay plague' by some); the World Health Organisation retained the classification of homosexuality as a 'mental illness' until 1992; the age-of-consent was not equalised until the 2000 'Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act'; the now infamous Section 28 amendment was not repealed until 2003 (2000 for the equivalent legislation in Scotland); protection from discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of sexual-orientation was not introduced until the 'Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003'; the 'Gender Recognition Act' only came into effect in 2005; civil partnerships were not introduced until 2005; joint- and step-adoption by same-sex couples has only been available since 2005 (2009 in Scotland); and 'equal marriage' remains a controversial topic of debate across the UK.

[113] 'Fringe!' was launched by 'queer creatives as a community response to arts cuts carnage' (<http://fringefilmfest.com>). Figure 23 includes an image of the Facebook post from which 'Fringe!' sprung. Two of the four instigators attended the 2012 LLGFF as industry delegates and were interviewed during fieldwork. Three further interviewees were also heavily involved in both festivals.

is an argument that, in order to be successful, these films invite a heterosexual gaze and do not, in fact, provide 'authentic' depictions of the multiplicities of queer experiences. As the below extract explains:

> *These big Hollywood films* ***<u>say</u> they are queer*** *- 'Brokeback Mountain'*[114] *and 'The Kids are All Right'*[115] *when they are quite clearly not queer!* ***A straight audience will watch those films and have a completely different take on them to a gay audience****. [...] I think [Brokeback Mountain] was* ***made for straight women****! It's a gay love story for straight women. That's* ***how it was marketed and that was the main audience****...* ***<u>We see the world differently. Straights and gays do see the world differently and so you need a film festival to reflect that world back to us</u>****.*
>
> (Participant 2)

In spite of positive aspects relating to mainstream visibility, if such films are perceived by (segments of) queer communities as lacking integrity or validity as explorations of our shared cultures and concerns, the voice resonating above is suggestive of a wider hunger for a dedicated space that can house a broader canvas of queer experiences. Notably, a number of participants, in discussing the continued need for a dedicated queer-film festival, articulated a politicised understanding of the industry through a perceived marginalisation of queer cinema. The resulting continued necessity for dedicated festivals is further illustrated in the following extract: 'For many queer filmmakers it's the only place where their films really can be shown, because a lot of queer cinema is very niche and won't be shown in mainstream cinema. Really the [queer] film festivals are their home' (Participant 12).

Crucially, it is through the enactment of *politicising* that the festival holds value in reflecting current queer political and social concerns through relevant films and events and engaging with activists. Exploration of this identity-forming and meaning-making practice illuminates the enactment of *politicising* at the LLGFF as reflective of a parallel community-wide politicising conducted by LGBTQ individuals and communities. Furthermore, consideration of this practice also highlights the evolution of the somewhat anchoring relationship between *politicising* events/actions/festival to the value of the festival. Thus, *politicising* is a key mechanism in *advocating [the]*

[114] (Dir: Lee; USA, 2005).
[115] (Dir: Cholodenko; USA, 2010).

continued value of [the] festival by illustrating its relevance and significance to queer communities and thereby *legitimising* its role as a community festival.

REPRESENTING COMMUNITIES

Three main fashions in which the LLGFF operates as (and has value as) a symbolic and literal representative of queer communities are explored below. Firstly, and most perceptibly, the LLGFF provides filmic representations of queer identities and cultures to LGBTQ communities and beyond. As outlined above, the dearth of images of queer culture in mainstream cinema is indicative of the continued value of the festival for queer communities and filmmakers. The importance of seeing and exploring our cultures and identities — and our shared histories — in and through the filmic arts is articulated in the below extract *[remembering]*:

> *It's very important for the **emotional health** of lesbians, gay men, transgender and bisexuals... to **see something of their lives reflected on the screen**. Because **I'm old enough to remember a time when there was a near total invisibility and the only way to find out things was to just read enormous amounts and find clues**.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Furthermore, as the following excerpt from a film distributor and community member elaborates, the festival may present a rare avenue for access to filmic representations that mirror some of the more marginal communities that fall within (or even outwith) the wider 'LGBTQI'[116] umbrella:

> *If you take the LFF, there will always be a few lesbian and gay films in that but it will **only be a few... And <u>those films can never really be representative of the entire LGBT community and all of the sub-divisions within</u>**. [...] For a lot of people, [the LLGFF] might be the **<u>only representation</u>** that they see... **regardless of the quality** of the filmmaking or film-production and so forth [...]. Equally **there are films that will never have that distribution but***

[116] 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex'. Other sub-groups are occasionally included in this acronym (such as 'Asexual' or 'Questioning') but this is unusual and LGBT is the most common usage.

> ***there is an audience desperate to see them*** *and this is very possibly the* ***only chance they get to see them****. So I think* ***culturally the LLGFF is vitally important for us****.*[117]
>
> (Participant 11)

It may be the case that such marginal groups are not catered for by the mainstream or the ('professional') queer-film industry; more minor potential audiences can be regarded as too small for distribution or marketing-supported DVD release to be commercially viable. However, programmers are, where appropriate, willing to give poorly-funded or less-professional works screen-time in order to cater for these minorities, providing value to both sub-cultures and budding filmmakers *[maintaining multiplicity; recognising [diverse] stakeholders*; *facilitating industry networking]*. For instance, one programmer notes that: 'a lot of trans work especially, a lot is low budget. And a lot can be quite kind of shaky and ropey' (Participant 3).

Secondly, the LLGFF provides, through the BFI, both a literal and symbolic representation of 'the gay community'[118] to the wider public. Evidently, through the twenty-six iterations of the LLGFF to 2012, the BFI has a historical *legitimising* association with queer audiences, industry and beyond *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*. Arguably, following from its bold beginnings, the powerful and enduring alliance between queer communities and this leviathan institution is one of the few long-lasting bonds through which queer communities have been represented to, and *legitimis[ed]* for, the wider British public. The professional enactment of this practice is most perceptible in the 'Press and PR' operations of the festival; coordinated and organised by the mother institution, the BFI *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries; spanning multiple roles]*. An interesting example of the festival's role in presenting 'the gay community' is the fact that print copies of the LLGFF programme (and an invitation to book Priority Member tickets ahead of 'the public') are posted to *all* BFI members, regardless of whether or not they have registered a special interest *[contesting ownership; engaging with stereotypes]*. In this regard the LLGFF is treated not as a specialist-interest festival but as desirable and prominent as other BFI festivals such as

[117] Again, note the telling slippage of pronoun usage *[blurring subjectivities]*.
[118] A distinction is drawn here between a singular (unsocialised) understanding of 'the gay community' and a more pluralistic understanding of the diversity of queer communities.

the LFF. Furthermore, the festival organisers/programmers are often approached by mainstream media to speak on behalf of 'queer film' or topical issues (i.e. homophobia in minority-ethnicity communities, Christianity and sexuality etc.).

Thirdly, the festival has a role in providing representations of diverse queer sub-cultures to the wider public and also mutual representations within the LGBTQ sphere. A pertinent example is the extended *Channel 4 News* feature examining how and why films centred on unique aspects of 'the gay black experience' (Jon Snow - Channel 4 News, 2012) have come to the fore in recent years.[119] The LLGFF programme was utilised to demonstrate this and the item contained interviews with the LLGFF Senior Programmer, a queer BME filmmaker *Campbell X* (a former LLGFF programmer, her feature *Stud Life*[120] held two prime slots in the 2012 festival) and a representative of 'UK Black Pride'. Further to this, the festival — and the films selected for inclusion — re-present elements of queer communities to the wider queer populace. For instance, aside from UK-based BME queer cultures, the festival also explores queer life across the globe, disability, myriad interpretations and performances of gender (i.e. genderqueer, transgender), marginal groups (i.e. intersex, pandrogeny), sexuality and the elderly, and minority interests (e.g. pornography) *[connecting communities]*.

Evidently, the festival (and the BFI) acts as a mediator of meaning in the perception of queer identities and cultures, both within our communities and to the wider public. Notably, the groups and communities at the fringe of mainstream 'queer culture' that are included in and represented by the festival are awarded a form of recognition that may normalise and *legitimis[e]* their concerns. Furthermore, the BFI as an institution enhances the standing of the festival's constituent communities and, through representing 'LGBT' culture to the mainstream, plays a part in normalising community concerns and cultures, as the below extract highlights:

> *It's a* ***national institute so it reaches larger audience, adds to the visibility of the community and issues surrounding it*** *and the sole fact it's been held in such a* ***renowned institution adds to the credibility of the LGBT filmmaking,***

[119] The bibliography details a URL through which this feature can be viewed (Channel 4 News, 2012) and provides details of a similar but abridged print version (Cain, 2012).
[120] (Dir: Campbell X; UK, 2011).

community and the issues surrounding it.

(Participant 10)

In normalising and thereby *legitimising* festival communities and concerns, the LLGFF therefore has a continuous value to queer communities that, in turn, *legitimises* (and *safeguard[s]*) its own role as a community festival *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*. Having considered normalising as a community-wide phenomenon, the following extract provides a fitting example of how this positively impacts personal familial relationships for one constituent member of the BME queer community, at home in this legitimised and legitimising space:

> *I feel **this is a space that is so much more accessible for a lot of people who are maybe scared of coming out.** Or, it's a really nice place to bring family members. **I've brought my mum to the festival**. She was slightly unnerved by the experience. But **I probably wouldn't take her to Pride!** [...] But there's, you know. **"It's the BFI! It's... a proper place!"***

(Participant 4)

The two practices explored above illuminate some of the meaning-making processes through which the LLGFF remains relevant for queer communities: by actively engaging with our (political) concerns and in acting as a visible symbol of queer cultures and creativity. The historic value of the 'London *Lesbian* and *Gay* Film Festival' as a legitimising mechanism for the 'lesbian and gay' community has evolved as the festival engages with other diverse segments of the LGBTQ population.[121] Thus, the value and relevance of the LLGFF — and, therefore, its legitimacy as a community-based festival — is now anchored in this continued representation of diverse queer communities and continuous interactions with their wide-ranging concerns.

[121] Notably, in 2014 the LLGFF was rebranded as 'BFI Flare: London LGBT Film Festival'.

2.4 - SUMMARY: INSIGHTS FROM 'PRACTICES OF LEGITIMISING'

As a festival inextricably intertwined with several core communities, the excerpts presented in this section have illuminated how the continued relevance, importance and value of the festival — and, therefore, its continued enactment — relies upon the continued and continual operation of mechanisms of legitimation. The eleven practices explored in this section shed light upon the processes through which *legitimising* occurs and their consideration clarifies the relationship of the LLGFF to its constituent communities (and beyond). Additionally, they elucidate how community members' (differing) conceptualisations of the blending of co-existing 'versions' of the festival (high-brow, community-centred and professional) shape the collective myriad expectations of what the festival 'should' be. These extracts also indicate how the practices explored operate as a lynchpin of the festival's continued existence (and positionalities); by playing a *legitimising* role that evidences or ensures that the festival continues to serve these expectations well. Given the festival's complex overlapping positionalities, this *legitimising* function can be understood to simultaneously operate on multiple levels. Furthermore, the representative potential of the festival has been argued to contribute to a legitimation of aspects of LGBTQ communities and culture. In connecting diverse and, at times, disparate populations, the festival propagates multifarious queer cultural production and consumption and, in turn, secures its own future.

3: GATEKEEPING: *SUSTAINING FESTIVAL COMMUNITIES AND AFFIRMING/EVALUATING OWN/OTHERS' INSIDER STATUS*

"It's quite a long answer but it is about important links, I guess, and the spider's web of networks and influences that mould anyone's life. I joined the Belfast Gay Liberation Society in 1975 and in Gay News, at the time, there was always a column about gay film, which was very interesting... and I was always very keen on film! When I came to London in the summer in 1977 I came to this building where Richard Dyer[121] had his 'Images of Homosexuality' season. [...] Later, I was very involved as an activist in the gay community and I met a guy called Mark Finch[122] [...] who had set up a thing called the Piccadilly Film Festival and we did film presentations for Square Peg magazine at the Scala cinema. He said to me 'there's a job going at the BFI, you should really apply' and I thought 'I don't know enough about cinema. They are experts at the BFI and I've got a law degree, it's not exactly the right qualification' … but I was interviewed and I joined the BFI. The year before [1986] had been the first Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. I always went along … and always wanted to be involved and had done some work as a Press Officer on it but I only formally applied for a [LLGFF] position as a programmer in the year 2000, I think. But I said in my interview 'it feels like I've been preparing for this role all my life', … that I'd been to the Berlin film festival, I'd made it my personal passion to seek out as much as I could about queer cinema. So, it's a long answer but that's how I got here."

(Participant 1)

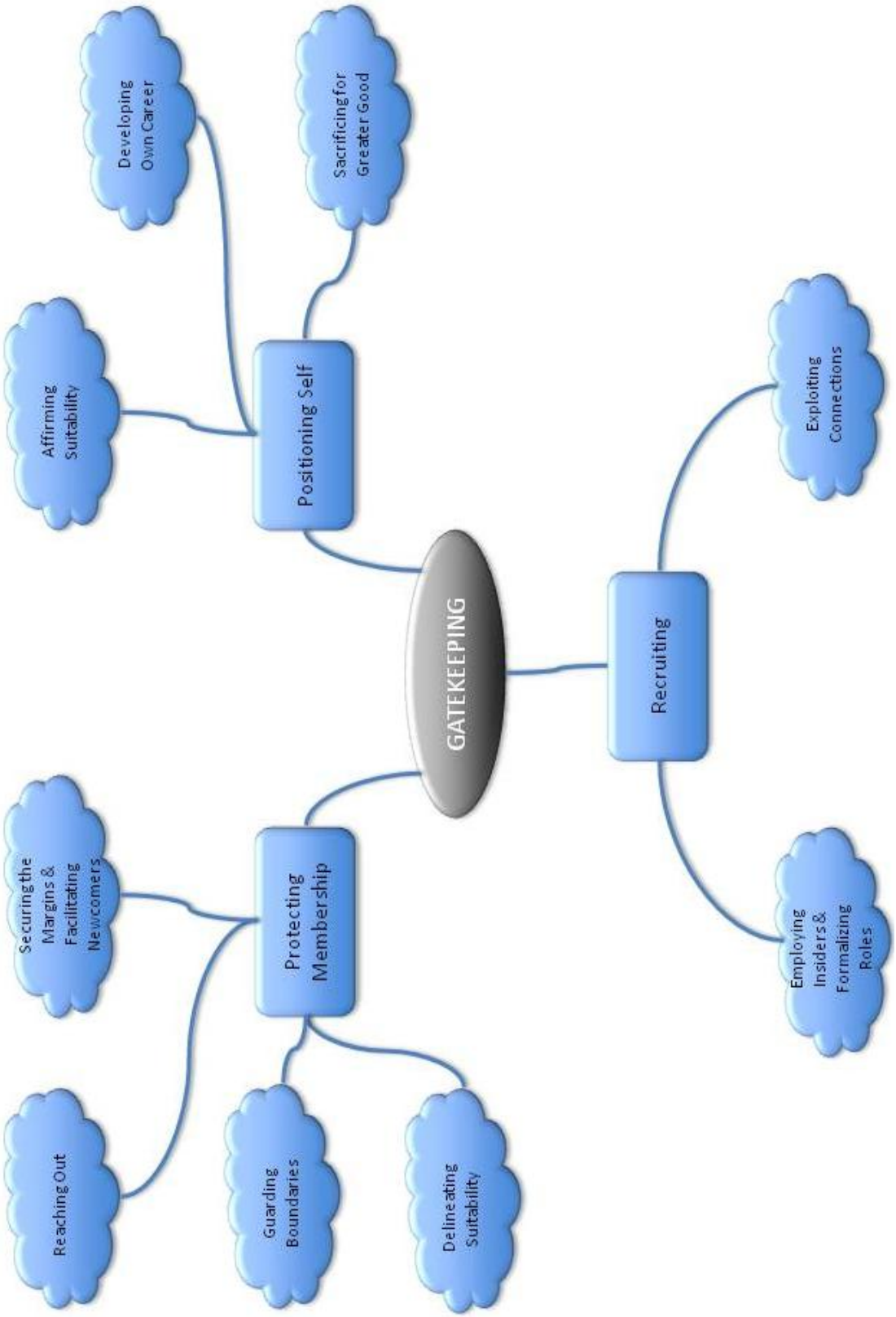
"It's just an honour and a privilege to be a part of it... Filmmakers are wonderful people because they do work miracles. And they're not just interested in cinema. They are interested in history and art and fashion and sex and people, and they are very stimulating and entertaining to be around... If that's not too shallow a thing to say."

(Participant 1)

[122] Dyer is a prominent (LGBTQ-)film historian and theorist, currently Professor of Film Studies at Kings College London and the University of St Andrews.
[123] Finch was a queer-film programmer and promoter. He worked at the LLGFF and then the San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, until his death in 1995 (1961-1995). Finch was a former student of Richard Dyer and also a friend of Tom Abell, founder of Peccadillo Pictures.

The epigraphs on the previous page give a flavour of the intricate and web-like sphere of connections that characterises the journey of many of those privileged to be involved with the festival. The richness of this web is explored through the third theme to be examined in this chapter: 'Gatekeeping'. This thematic grouping comprises three component categories, which will be presented in the following corresponding sub-sections: (3.1) Protecting Membership; (3.2) Positioning Self; and (3.3) Recruiting. As illuminated in Figure 29 overleaf, these categories, in turn, comprise nine practices, which will be discussed in relation to relevant data extracts. Although sub-sections 3.2 and 3.3 principally utilise examples relating to the festival-organising and -enacting communities, many of the practices below could also be fruitfully explored with regards to the other communities that interpenetrate the LLGFF. Finally, a summary section (3.4) will elaborate upon the theme of 'Gatekeeping'.

Figure 29: Gatekeeping Theme



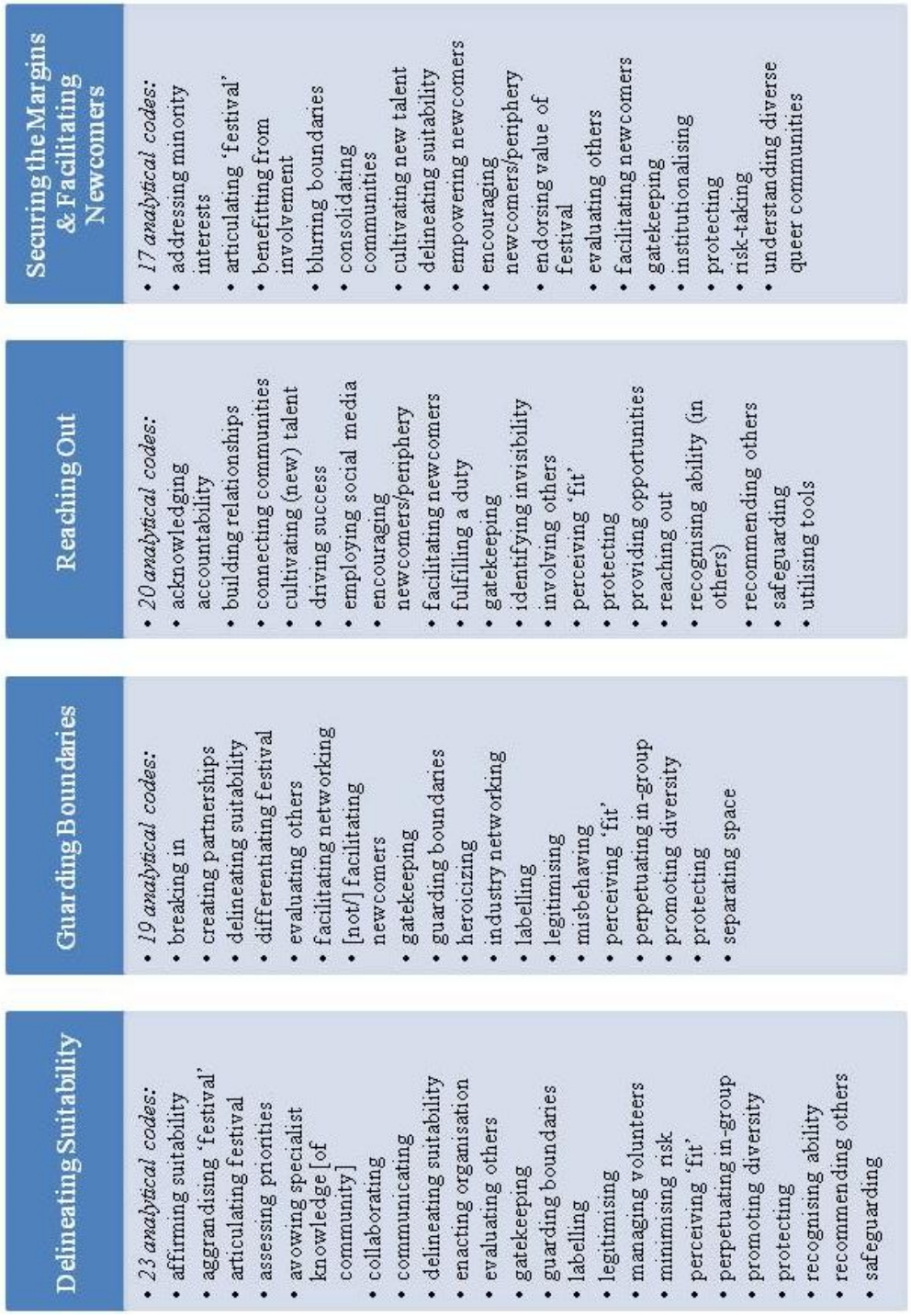
3.1 - PROTECTING MEMBERSHIP

This category comprises four practices — *delineating suitability*, *guarding boundaries*, *reaching out* and *securing the margins & facilitating newcomers* — discussed below, which serve to control, protect and sustain those communities which interpenetrate the festival: LLGFF 'staffing' entourage, queer filmmakers and wider industry, and LGBTQ communities and sub-cultures. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these four practices are shown in Figure 30 overleaf.

DELINEATING SUITABILITY:
EVALUATING 'FIT' OF FILMS, OTHERS (AND THE RESEARCHER) TO THE FESTIVAL

As previously discussed, there are a number of factors that influence the inclusion of films and events in the festival. An inextricably linked element is the over-arching delineation of what constitutes 'suitable' genres, content, themes and events for inclusion, and also whom the festival should (and should not) cater for *[2.2 Justifying Decision-Making*; *cultivating communities; representing communities]*. Programmers occupy a privileged position in this regard, although individual and collective decisions are shaped by exogenous factors, BFI influence and gradually evolving group-norms. The following excerpt presents an interesting example of this process, but from the alternative angle of *audience suitability* for a particular film: '**you've got to think through the translation of a film**... One that plays well in America **won't necessarily play well here**. Or it plays well in Cannes or Berlin... but, you think, "I'm not sure that we have ***that*** **audience**"' (Participant 2). However, key stakeholders also engage in the enactment of this practice: audiences provide feedback that the festival must attend to *[answering back]* and industry sentinels can both facilitate and hamper the efforts of the LLGFF custodians (as touched upon in '*strategizing and avoiding risk*'), as the below excerpt from a film distributor illustrates:

Figure 30: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Protecting Membership'



> ***It's a bit symbiotic**. We very often have films that they [LLGFF] really want... And **we have to weigh up whether putting them in is good for the film**... we do that with any festival really. There's some films that **we might <u>let the</u> festival have**... regardless of whether it's just for them to make some money from. And there are other films that we have in the festival because... **we want to see them there, for the profile** that it will give them. It's a combination really. There are key films that we want... the **exposure**. And then there are other films that we let the festival have. Simply from a... **friendly perspective**!*
>
> (Participant 11)

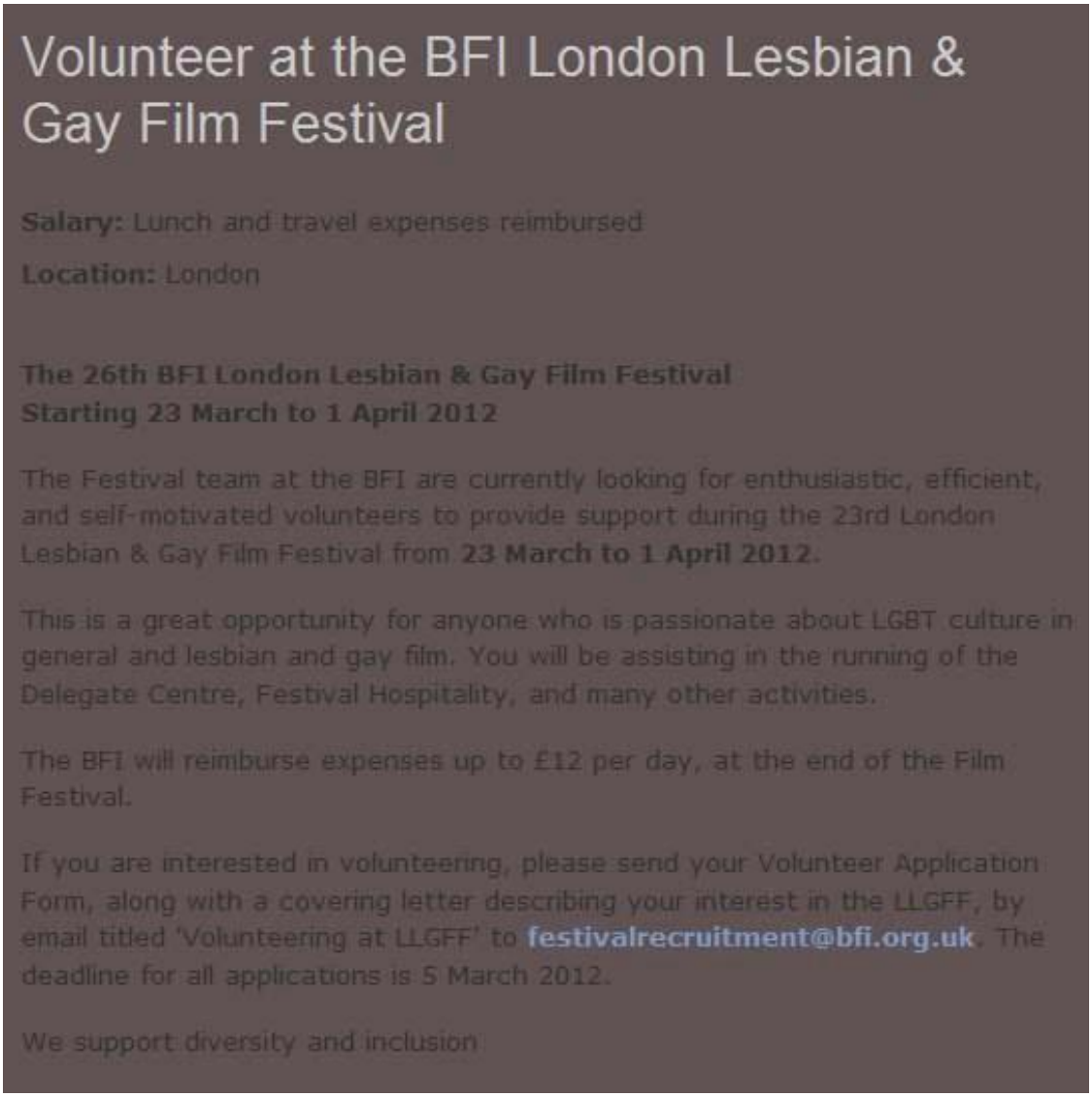
Thus, in a clearly visible manner, the organising community of the festival act as custodians of the LLGFF-film-industry elite and also of the festival's scope and standing.

Moving beyond festival programming, a multitude of other dimensions of the enactment of this practice can be fruitfully explored. For instance, in interviews participants frequently evaluated their colleagues and passed judgement on their 'fit' for their respective roles, albeit these assessments were almost universally positive. The mechanism of this appraisal was primarily through reference to the participant's perception of their colleagues' film-criticism credentials, queer-cinema knowledge, understanding of LGBTQ communities, and the 'individual' contribution that they offered to the festival.

A salient example of the demarcation between those apposite to festival staffing purposes and those not can be found in the stewardship role of the Volunteers Coordinator. In addition to completing application forms indicating relevant knowledge, skills, experience, interests and reasons for applying (BFI, unknown-a; see Figures 64 and 65 in Appendix 2), volunteering applicants were asked to include a covering letter, as indicated in Figure 31 overleaf. The impression garnered from the job description, at least initially to the researcher, was that enthusiasm and a general understanding of LGBT culture (amassed through lived experience) would suffice to secure a position. This impression was initially cemented through my early observations of volunteers: the majority of tasks undertaken were unskilled (i.e. bar work and serving/making coffee, 'running' etc.). However, in these crucially stakeholder-facing roles these individuals

navigated the complexities of queer culture, gender performance, industry recognition and queer politics. This was, in fact, reflected in a rigorous screening of applications

Figure 31: Volunteer Job Description (BFI, 2012e)



Volunteer at the BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

Salary: Lunch and travel expenses reimbursed

Location: London

The 26th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival
Starting 23 March to 1 April 2012

The Festival team at the BFI are currently looking for enthusiastic, efficient, and self-motivated volunteers to provide support during the 23rd London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival from **23 March to 1 April 2012**.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who is passionate about LGBT culture in general and lesbian and gay film. You will be assisting in the running of the Delegate Centre, Festival Hospitality, and many other activities.

The BFI will reimburse expenses up to £12 per day, at the end of the Film Festival.

If you are interested in volunteering, please send your Volunteer Application Form, along with a covering letter describing your interest in the LLGFF, by email titled 'Volunteering at LLGFF' to **festivalrecruitment@bfi.org.uk**. The deadline for all applications is 5 March 2012.

We support diversity and inclusion

[guarding boundaries; employing insiders & formalising roles], demonstrated in the excerpt below:

> *It's quite transparent some [applicants] just want to get some, *any*, experience in film... I interviewed a couple and* ***asked them pointedly: "What's your interest in queer cinema?"****. And you can tell [...]. You look for* ***literacy in queer cinema*** *and an* ***awareness of LGBT community****, I think that's really important. And an* ****in-depth* awareness of it as well, an insider look at the community*** *because I think there are* ***particular sensitivities that volunteers need to be aware of****... especially around trans issues and things*

> *like that. You can find some people who are not aware of the LGBT community or who might just* ***say really inappropriate things or not know the etiquette****.*
>
> (Participant 5)

Thus, demonstration of significant socialisation to queer cultures, communities and cinema emerges as criteria of 'suitability' for membership of the festival voluntary staff *[affirming suitability; blurring subjectivities]*. Language can be seen to operate as a barrier to the uninitiated in the above quoted example 'literacy' reflects applicants understanding of our culture and 'sensitivities'. The enactment of this practice is crucial in protecting the membership of multiple layers of festival communities and is facilitated through socialisation to these communities and to the LLGFF itself.

A further striking example of the protective impulse to *delineat[e] suitability* can be gleaned directly from this study. Prior to the commencement of interviews, participants were taken through the relevant information and forms relating to ethical approval and, finally, asked if they had any questions. A universal (and often sole) query related to the reasons for my interest in the festival. It was clear that participants were principally interested in ascertaining my status as either an 'outsider' or an in-group member of two key communities: LGBTQ and queer cinephiles. Some participants were explicitly direct in their enquiries; one in particular stated that my non-inclusion of this 'vital information' from the Participant Information Sheet may have discouraged some potential participants from taking part (Participant 7). Once my position as one 'sensitised to community concerns' was established, participants were visibly more at ease and, I believe, were more open in our discussion than if I had been perceived as a undesirable 'above and outwith' researcher with only objective regard for the festival. This will be further discussed in the following chapter. Nevertheless, in the case of those highly knowledgeable regarding queer cinema, some participants were keen to gauge my literacy through reference to both classic and more obscure films/filmmakers.

GUARDING BOUNDARIES:
SPATIAL, OF COMMUNITIES AND OF 'VALID' FILMMAKING PRACTICE

As previously explored in 2.2 and in this sub-section (3.1), the bounds of membership to the community of festival-organisers is protected by recourse to (subjective evaluation of) fulfilment of criteria, such as socialisation to and specialist knowledge of: the festival, its constituent communities and queer cinema. A poignant historical example of the (excessive) *guarding [of] boundaries* of this community is described in the extract below:

> *A position came up to be Assistant Programmer [at LLGFF] for lesbian films and so I went for the interview. They didn't select me, firstly, they selected someone else!* ***Then they realised that they weren't gay, that they were straight and*** *[starts laughing]* ***they couldn't give them the job!*** *So then they offered me the job. But then they said later in hindsight that they thought that I was the best candidate.*
>
> (Participant 12)

This may seem somewhat unethical when considered through the framework of current legislation *[misbehaving]*[124] but is indicative of an historic impulse to defend both membership of this privileged group and also, by extension, festival communities themselves. Although, presumably, the initial candidate fulfilled the criteria utilised as intangible boundary-objects to membership, their irreconcilable immutable-status as an outsider — a non-member of LGBTQ communities — invalidated their entry to the festival-organising community (whereas the participant's insider-status enabled it).

This sentiment, in part, also echoes in the language utilised around the validity of queer-filmmaking practices, as the following excerpt illuminates: 'we brought the filmmakers over, **who were both queer**, we brought the cast members... **everyone was queer in the film. That was the other good thing about that film**' (Participant 2). Further to the incorporation of this dimension into *evaluating [an individual] film*, some members of marginal filmmaking communities displayed a concern for the 'purity' of

[124] The *Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003* introduced a ban on employment discrimination on the basis of sexuality (now covered by the *Equality Act 2010*).

their collective voice. An example of note relates to the *'Transgender Representation: are we nearly there yet?'* panel discussion (and the trans-filmmaking networking event that followed). During observation of the discussion it became apparent that questions were being raised around the permeability of the boundaries of (trans-filmmaking) community membership. These paladins of trans filmmaking (notably one was a participant, programmer, community member and filmmaker) raised concerns that the majority of visible examples of films/TV programmes exploring gender came from outwith the trans community.[125] Instead, it was suggested that material produced *by* community-members *for* community members was of greater value, provided greater insight and, through engaging a more 'genuine' voice, would indirectly protect the wider trans community.

It is in the provision of festival events that the enactment of this practice is most patently manifest. The LLGFF's palpable role in oiling the gears of queer-film-industry networking will be further discussed in 'Professional Networking' (4.1). Nevertheless, it should be noted that these dedicated industry-networking events and spaces are only for those sanctioned by the festival-organising elite: volunteers 'guard' doorways and delegates must undergo an approval process. The potential impact of this sanctification of space upon neophyte filmmakers is elaborated upon by a LGBTQ distributor in the following extract:

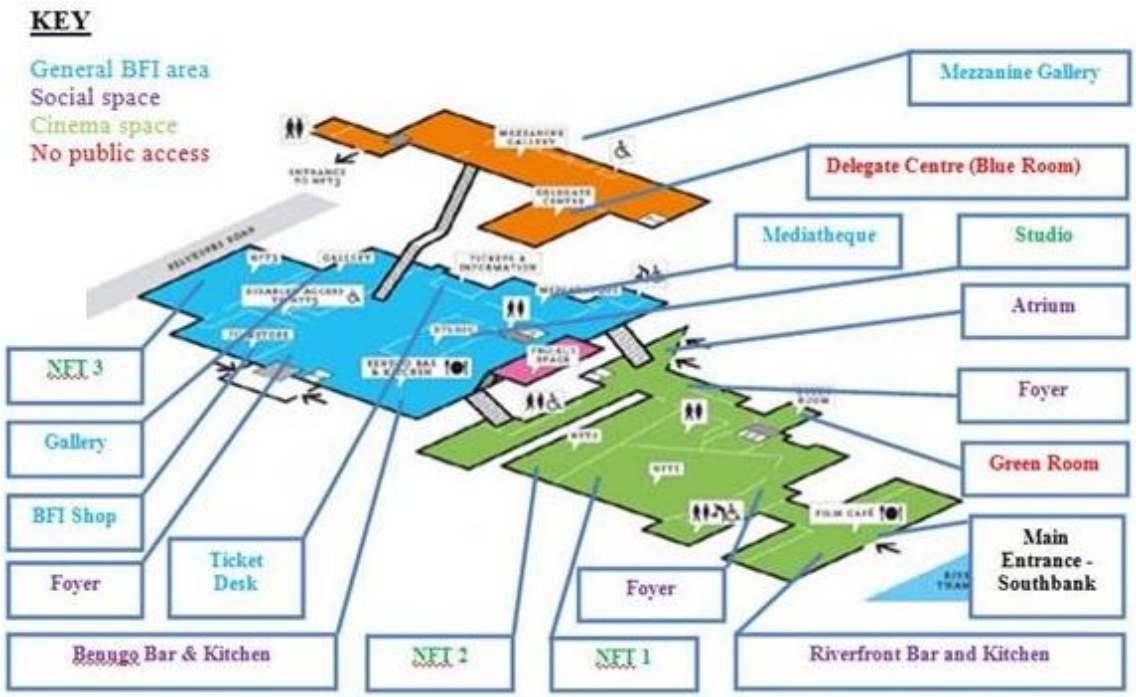
> ***As long as people are let in,*** *it gives younger or 'wannabe' filmmakers or short filmmakers the* ***opportunity of meeting other people within the industry****. [...]* ***It just depends how exclusive the events generally are****. I know that usually they are* ***badge-only****, in that* ***everybody had to have a badge of some kind to be allowed in****. And they were generally* ***by invitation****.*
>
> (Participant 11)

Moreover, in juxtaposition to the ideals underlying *constructing community space*, the separation of spaces at the festival — professional and non-professional, public and private, in-group and outsiders, festival elite and 'punters' — reverberates throughout the BFI building and is demonstrated in Figure 32 overleaf.[126] In addition to already

[125] For example, *My Transsexual Summer* (Channel 4; UK, 2011), *Transamerica* (Dir: Tucker; USA, 2005), *XXY* (Dir: Puenzo; Argentina, 2007) and *Boys Don't Cry* (Dir: Pierce; USA, 1999).
[126] See also Figure 56 in Appendix 1.

'private' spaces (indicated in red), other areas such as the Atrium and Mezzanine Gallery were frequently cordoned off to prevent public access during a private/industry event.

Figure 32: LLGFF floor plan (researcher-edited version of BFI, unknown-c)



A relevant example relating to the separation of space relates to my first night at the festival. On weekend evenings, the LLGFF hosts free celebratory 'parties' for LGBTQ communities in the Riverfront Bar (the most public-facing as it sits directly on the Southbank). As Figure 33 overleaf shows, the *Club Kali* event marketing promised 'glitz', 'glam', a diverse 'kaleidoscope' of attendees and a welcoming atmosphere. However, upon arrival the atmosphere was indeterminate from any other bar along the busy Southbank and I assumed that I had mixed up the venue and proceeded instead to the Benugo Bar. Similarly, at the Benugo there was no sense of celebration and the crowd seemed composed of splintered groups that reflected the typical clientele on any given weekend at the BFI. However, I then noticed several individuals going up/down the main staircase displaying a number of markers of LGBTQ identity (easily perceptible to those socialised). Somewhat naively, I followed them upstairs to what I believed to be the re-located *Club Kali* party. The atmosphere was lively and

celebratory, the party-goers somewhat reflected the diverse LGBTQ population, and the music was identifiable as classic LGBT 'favourites'. However, it was not until my departure that I noticed a red velvet rope, severing access to what I afterwards discovered to be a private festival-launch party for industry delegates and festival elite that I had inadvertently 'gate-crashed'.

Figure 33: 'Around the World in 80 Tunes with Club Kali' event copy (BFI, 2012d)

For each of the myriad and overlapping communities that interpenetrate the festival, there are individuals and groups that have the potential to operate as gatekeeping guards: either blocking or facilitating access to each tier of the festival elite and also to privileged spaces/platforms in the fabric of the LLGFF. The *guarding [of] boundaries* can thus be understood to operate conjointly with the practice of *delineating suitability* in: the collective pursuit of *protecting membership* of festival communities (both elite and otherwise); and the cementing of a *highly socialised* festival elite, and the processes in place to ensure it remains as such.

REACHING OUT:
EXTENDING COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

The prestige of the LLGFF previously outlined in 2.1 draws in a plethora of potential festival staff and a glut of submissions from budding filmmakers. In this sense, there is no ostensible 'need' for the festival to extend an arm in order to foster (and thus 'protect') these communities. However, as will be elaborated upon shortly in *securing the margins & facilitating newcomers*, in its guise as a community-based festival the LLGFF does reach out to nascent queer filmmakers. Several manifestations of this have already been discussed, such as the *Future Film Programme* for young filmmakers *[1.3 Propagating Industry]*.

On the other hand, the successful cultivation of LLGFF 'membership' comprising festival audiences is crucial in protecting and *safeguarding* the continued success and impact of the festival and, therefore, its *legitim[acy]* for and desirability and relevance to the communities that it wishes to serve. The impetus to make provision for a diverse ensemble of queer communities has already been considered (see 1.4 and 2.2). However, attempts to reach beyond established and burgeoning festival audiences can be traced through observation of particular events and consideration of discernible interactions between the festival and wider LGBTQ public. For instance, visible attempts to reach out to younger members and alternative sub-cultures can be seen in the provision of well-known DJs at festival parties such as *Club Kali*.

An interesting but now defunct example of a displaced enactment of this practice is the 'LLGFF on Tour', an initiative that blurred the temporal and spatial boundaries of the LLGFF by its very nature. A limited selected programme from the festival toured throughout the UK at regional high-brow contemporary-arts venues/theatres and was also informally incorporated into regional queer-arts festivals. This aspect of *reaching out* is strongly interlinked with the community-based conceptualisation of the festival and reflects the protective impulse to fulfil a duty to the wider queer community by *reaching out* to the periphery. In recalling this aspect of the enactment of this practice,

the following extract displays a sense of pride in being able to benefit the extended community (outwith the London-centric festival):

> *Every year there was a **lesbian and gay tour**. I was in charge and I really built the tour up [...] **I saw what a difference it had made for people that the tour was going to**... [...]. **It was a place where people knew that they could go and they could see these films**.*
>
> (Participant 12)

In a similar vein, the LLGFF employs social media and networks (i.e. both the BFI and dedicated LLGFF Twitter and Facebook accounts) in order to reach out to both potential audience members and the wider scattered queer community. However, this aspect of this practice is hampered by the previously discussed markedly compressed timeframe in the run-up to the festival (see 2.1). There is relatively little information posted on the official website until shortly before the festival itself. A conspicuous example of this impediment can be traced through a potential but under-utilised marketing and outreach channel: DIVA.[127] As the programme Press Release was not until 23 February, this was too late for inclusion of information or a feature in the March edition of DIVA. The festival was instead publicised in the April edition; on sale at the end of March, after the LLGFF had already begun.

Reaching out to diverse segments of the LGBTQ populace is a key cementing mechanism in sustaining the festival by protecting and preserving the membership of, in particular, festival audiences. However, the enactment of this practice requires a socialised and nuanced insight into diverse and extended LGBTQ communities in order to best communicate with and provide for them. The provision of parties and events that cater to younger audiences or those sub-cultures that are historically more marginal to the festival, coupled with use of specific communication channels, has the potential to gradually shape the identity of the festival itself by amending the make-up of festival audiences. However, the compressed timeframe operates as a pervasive barrier to the enactment of this practice in hampering communication and marketing activities.

[127] DIVA, first published in 1994, 'remains the only monthly glossy newsstand magazine for lesbians and bi women in the UK' (Diva Magazine website).

SECURING THE MARGINS & FACILITATING NEWCOMERS

Some of the direct means by which disparate elements of the *potential* festival audience are both catered-for and reached-out to (within each festival iteration) have already been discussed throughout this chapter (see, particularly, *recognising stakeholders* [2.2] and *maintaining multiplicity* [1.4]). However, yet to be discussed is an underlying purposive activity undertaken by festival management to stimulate such practices and, albeit indirectly, *secur[e] the margins* of festival-audience membership. Despite a lack of clear contractual delineation of programmer roles (various interviews), it is evident that each programmer had tacit overall accountability for a particular audience segment or genre *[5.1 Establishing Individual Boundaries]*. This is particularly perceptible with regards to trans and BME cinema and, as the following extracts illuminates, can be traced to the recruitment process itself:

> ***They knew that they wanted a more diverse programming team***. *I guess* ***there was an agenda to find a person of colour*** *because X*[128] *was leaving. Which makes me feel slightly squeamish but, at the same time, I'm really glad to be able to programme the films that I do and...****I don't necessarily feel that confident that other people would find them interesting enough to want to programme them***.
>
> (Participant 4)

In this way, 'festival management' operate as stewards of the festival, hiring those befitting of the festival's diverse stakeholders according to applicants' gatekeeping potential to draw in those stakeholders on the margins. These employees then, in turn, can protect and consolidate marginal festival communities.

The festival also plays a central role in fostering membership of the queer-filmmaking community. A notable example of the lasting impact of the LLGFF in facilitating a non-established queer filmmaker is discussed below. Lacking the funds/resources to shoot an entire screenplay, director Rees instead shot the first act and secured a slot in the LLGFF as a short. Following from the (perceived) critical

[128] LLGFF Programmer (2005-2009), queer filmmaker and founder of *rukus*! (black LGBTQ-arts organisation).

recognition that resulting from this showcasing, funding was then secured to re-shoot the entire script as the feature *Pariah*,[129] a LLGFF 2012 feature film. The enactment of this practice can also be traced in some relationships between programmers and emerging filmmakers, as illustrated in the following excerpt: 'you **build relationships with people** [...] and then try and show what they've done, **in order to encourage the rest of the funding to come** from that screening [...]. **I've looked at scripts and programmed off that or a work-in-progress**' (Participant 4). This sentiment echoes throughout programmer interviews. However, there is recognition that the outcomes of this practice carries a risk and also that *facilitating newcomers* is only made possible by the degree of autonomy granted to the programmers on account of their experience and expertise. The following excerpt highlights the overarching desire to extend an arm to emerging filmmakers: 'Sometimes it's almost like an **investment in the filmmakers' career**, you see something that you really want to grow so you **may give a filmmaker a chance**. I've learned that **this festival is an incredibly important showcase** for filmmakers' (Participant 1). Nevertheless, the following extract from an important industry delegate, a film-distributor, counters that the festival could do much more to facilitate effectively in this regard:

> *It treats the distributors and the key filmmakers really well. **It doesn't treat the other guys so well, the up-and-coming ones**. I think it needs to give... a little bit more to them. It's had that kind of **elitist streak** in it... for maybe the last ten, fifteen years, as it was striving to become a major, an important festival. Now it's reached it, I think it needs to be warmer towards... the newcomers… and to embrace them more. That's the advice I'd give it.*
>
> (Participant 11)

In the 26th iteration of the LLGFF, neophytes and peripheral members of the queer-filmmaking community were provided with encouragement, *professional networking* opportunities (see 4.1), skills sessions *[propagating industry]*, and, in some cases, a platform from which to showcase their work. In these ways, the LLGFF has a critical role in enabling emerging queer filmmaking. Notably, a number of prominent filmmakers — in both mainstream and queer cinema — have professional origins in the LLGFF, such as Lisa Cholodenko and Lisa Gornick. The festival provides an important

[129] (Dir: Rees; USA, 2011).

point of connection for nascent filmmakers *[4 Connecting]* and, if screened, a crucial legitimation of their work. This can, in turn, act to further their career and collectively protects and *safeguard[s]* the queer-filmmaking community. Furthermore, *securing the margins* of queer filmmaking (i.e. through the trans-filmmaking networking event) facilitates engagement with the respective peripheral segments of the wider LGBTQ community and, thus, protects their collective continued membership as festival audiences *[representing communities; recognising stakeholders]*.

The four practices explored above provide a structure through which to consider how membership of various tiers and communities of festival and industry elites is protected and defended against those not deemed to be eligible. In a simultaneous fashion, consideration of these interconnected practices conveys the manners in which membership of a multitude of festival communities is sustained, attended to, generated and extended. These practices collectively play both an identity-forming and order-producing role. Examination of their varied enactments reveals the capacity of certain groups to operate as gatekeepers, both permitting and denying access to a hive of myriad cross-community intersections.

3.2 - POSITIONING SELF

This category comprises three practices — *affirming suitability*, *developing own career* and *sacrificing (for greater good)* — discussed below, which collectively situate individuals amongst their peers, align them with particular groups or labels, and enable the justification of an individual's position within the bounds of particular tiers of the festival-elite. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 34 overleaf.

AFFIRMING SUITABILITY:
POSITIONING SELF AS DESERVING OF INCLUSION

Given the privileged nature of membership of the festival-organising (and festival-enacting) communities, it is perhaps unsurprising that a universal element of interview material was the vocal validation of each participant's access to these progressively inner-circles. A *conscious* oral affirmation of their suitability for their role often initially came about in response to an early interviewer query regarding how they came to be involved in the festival.[130] In particular, participants: articulated/professed specialist knowledge that they believed they possessed (i.e. of queer cinema trends/icons/history and queer cultures/histories/politics); listed relevant experience (e.g. shadowing their predecessor, as in the case of participant five); and aligned themselves with one of the myriad stakeholders and/or communities/sub-cultures that interpenetrate the festival *[blurring subjectivities]*. In the following excerpt, participant seven identifies the recognition of his socialisation to queer filmmaking as an entry route to a highly sought-after volunteer post: 'They saw my CV... they said I was really committed to film, gay and lesbian films, because I [had] made some that went to many festivals, LGBT festivals. They saw this as a huge advantage'. Further to this, participants frequently utilised emotive statements — blurring the line between their

[130] See interview guide in Appendix 2.

Figure 34: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Positioning Self'

professional roles and personal investment *[blurring subjectivities]* — to convey their deep commitment to the ideals of the festival and, therefore, the legitimacy of their involvement, as the extracts below demonstrate:

> *Even if I wasn't a programmer, I'd have to watch a lot of films. Because* ***I love film*** *and* ***I work for the BFI full-time*** *and it's just* ***my hobby, my life, my passion****. [...] That's* ***my own passion****,* ***history of cinema and especially queer cinema****.*
>
> (Participant 2)

> ***It's always been a consistent passion and interest of mine****. [...] It feels like I've been* ***preparing for this role all my life****. I had made it my* ***personal passion*** *to* ***seek out as much as I could*** *about queer cinema.*
>
> (Participant 1)

To merely consider the more purposive aspects of this practice, however, would be to neglect the omnipresent nature of *affirming suitability* that proliferates in more subtle forms. Throughout interviews and also observation during the festival, staff and volunteers made both purposive and *incidental* recourse to specialist cultural, technical and critical language (e.g. 'pandrogeny', 'lo-fi' and 'mise-en-scène' respectively), to reinforce their credentials. Furthermore, during interactions with industry delegates and festival audiences (i.e. during film introductions and audience Q&A sessions) programmers' language, cultural and filmic references (underpinned by the 'specialist knowledge' outlined above) and even their performance (through dress, presentation skills, persona and appearance) play a role in constructing their overall suitability. Memorably, one male programmer wore colourful suits throughout the festival that collectively constituted a rainbow, a queer cultural topos. Similarly, a 'femme' female programmer partook in a playful engagement with the performative nature of gender by wearing a suit, shirt and tie on Opening Night *[engaging with stereotypes]*.

Affirming suitability can thus be understood as the central meaning-making and identity-forming apparatus of *positioning self* as a competent and knowledgeable agent, deserving of inclusion within the walls of the festival-elite's realm. The key activities of this practice, outlined above, are underpinned by tacit knowledge, terminology, group-norms and, crucially, socialisation to both the festival and its communities. Notably, the

purposive and incidental display of proficiency in technical or specialist language, a barrier to the uninitiated, further positions the individual agent as an authority, well-placed to guide those (more peripheral) groups and individuals located across the festival macrocosm. However, it should be noted that programmers in particular also habitually engaged in downplaying their expertise, for instance highlighting their lack of formal qualifications in film curation. Nevertheless, this attested amateurism, whilst perhaps not insincere modesty, may veil their oft-emerging sense of self-assured security that permeates throughout the festival. This is demonstrated in the following extract: '**I knew exactly** who would be in the audience, **I could have named them before I saw them**! I knew what type of person, who that film would have attracted' (Participant 3).

DEVELOPING OWN CAREER

The manner in which the activities of this practice were particularly discernible during the festival was in the role of the volunteers.[131] As previously outlined, my initial intuition was that the majority of positions would be filled by LGBTQ individuals with a relatively amateur interest in film but, crucially, the goodwill to give their time. However, interviews with five current volunteers, six former volunteers and the Volunteers Coordinator revealed very different motivations and circumstances. As the following excerpt demonstrates, despite the relatively unskilled nature of a number of the tasks assigned to volunteers, these positions are, in fact, highly prized: 'it's a [...] **prestigious thing**. [...] there's **a lot of competition** for volunteer positions because they are like **internships in some ways**' (Participant 9).

In addition to the patent benefit of enhancing a CV through involvement with (and endorsement by) such a prestigious institution *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*, this

[131] The historical trajectory of now-established members of the festival elite, gaining and maintaining entry to overlapping inner-cores of festival communities, is primarily discussed later in this chapter (see 3.3). Similarly, aside from the overt prestige associated with involvement, the relationship between the LLGFF and the professional-development opportunities seized upon by the queer-filmmaking community are further explored elsewhere in this chapter (see 4.1 and 1.3).

excerpt is also suggestive of one of the additional perceived benefits articulated by multiple participants: learning opportunities. Markedly, two of the five current volunteers interviewed expressed a concrete interest in queer-film-festival programming and were both heavily involved in queer-community activist projects and arts festivals (notably, both were subsequently engaged as programmers for 'Fringe!' in 2013). The value of volunteering, in this regard, is expressed in the following extract from a (former-volunteer-turned) LLGFF programmer and full-time BFI Library employee: 'It's a **good way of getting some really good experience and grounding** in **what a festival *is* and *does***. I'd say it's **invaluable**. Whether that means that all the volunteers up there at the moment want my job... [laughs]' (Participant 2). Thus, the appeal of these positions is not only in their prestige but also in the perceived learning opportunities that it affords. This can be subsequently utilised in *developing own career* by using this (past) role to position oneself as having been immersed in a ideal socialisation arena *[affirming suitability]*.

A widespread underlying (or, indeed, conspicuous in many cases) desire, apparent in interview material, was the utilisation of volunteering as a means of gaining access to the creative and professional communities of the queer-film industry. The following excerpt, from a volunteer and award-winning (but young and un-established) filmmaker, illuminates how those on the periphery are aware of the career-relevant value of the reputation of the BFI and the connections that could be made through volunteering:

> ***I thought this will really be a good opportunity for me to network**. [... I heard about someone] that volunteered here and **after that she got a good job**. So, it is an example of the **possibilities** that you can get [...] **being associated with the BFI, the experience, networking**.*
>
> (Participant 7)

Moreover, in addition to making contacts that may be of use in the future, some volunteers actively utilise the connections that they make during the festival itself *[maintaining informal networks; exploiting connections]*, as the below extract illustrates:

> ***There are a couple of volunteers this year that do want to work in film*** *and* ***have made it known to a couple of staff*** *that... if there is anything around, to* ***try to [introduce them]*** *or at least to* ***give them some advice****.*
>
> (Participant 5)

Thus, an element of the desirability of utilising these positions as a mechanism to enable personal career development emerges from the networking opportunities that it affords *[4 Connecting]*.

The rigorous application process previously delineated in 3.1 reflects that these positions are, in fact, highly sought after 'keys', which can unlock entry points to formalised involvement in the realm of queer-arts festivals. Securing a high-status voluntary position with the LLGFF can be utilised in furthering one's career by *positioning [one]self* as: a high-calibre individual; socialised to queer cinema and film festival enactment; and (potentially) connected with influential members of the queer-film-industry elite. However, for those located beyond the festival periphery — disconnected from key gatekeepers and pervasive in-groups — but interested in involvement, the barriers to entry even as a volunteer may prove too high. Nevertheless, volunteering can be seen as a key identity-forming mechanism in the enactment of *developing own career*, which, in turn, is a key facet in shaping professional identities and *positioning self* as a valid member(/-to-be) of the festival inner-circles.

SACRIFICING (FOR GREATER GOOD):
SELF-SACRIFICE AND ITS ARTICULATION

Throughout observation periods at the festival, the intense nature and volume of hard-work being undertaken by staff was evident at every turn. It was impossible not to notice that the same faces, identifiable as staff (paid and voluntary) by their branded lanyards and/or festival t-shirts, were present and contributing to the continued smooth running of the festival, all day every day. As will be argued, there are two central aspects to this practice: the activities of self-sacrifice, and the secondary (self-promoting) articulation of these activities in order to *positio[n] self*.

In explaining their day-to-day roles and activities, festival staff universally made mention of instances where they had put the festival before themselves. In particular, programmers highlighted instances whereby they had utilised personal holidays in order to attend film festivals abroad *[festivals networking]* and — due to the aforementioned compressed time-frame — had to dedicate numerous evenings, weekends and even the festive-period across Christmas and New Year to viewing film material. Furthermore, numerous volunteers and (both former and present) temporary-contracted staff stated that they had utilised personal holiday or unpaid leave in order to contribute to the festival. This spirit of self-sacrifice is illuminated in the following extract, detailing a typical festival day:

> *I have to be here to open [the Delegate Centre] at 10am but in practice* ***I usually get here about 8am*** *to do some paperwork [...].* ***I close down the Delegate Centre at 6pm*** *and* ***I tend to then help out*** *the Hospitality and Events Co-ordinators with their evening events. Because* ***they are pretty stretched*** *and it's* ***good to be there for when they need something****. I usually* ***get home around midnight, unless there are late closes*** *like at the weekend.*
>
> (Participant 5)

In a similar vein, perhaps fuelled by the community-centred conceptualisation of the festival, a key industry stakeholder also alluded to historical commercial sacrifices made on their part in order to facilitate the successful enactment of the festival. Interestingly, this film-distributor, a key industry delegate since 1992, went on to highlight how the recent economic climate has impeded the extent to which such sacrifices can be made, as the below extract demonstrates:

> *Sometimes they [LLGFF]* ***want something that isn't going to be available****...* ***We try and work our way around that*** *but we have our own schedules to work to and if something isn't budgeted for until later in the year it's very difficult to get the materials [...] in time for the festival. So,* ***we won't do that unless the film is really going to benefit from it****.* ***We used to, and it used to kill us financially, but now we just have to be... realistic****.*
>
> (Participant 11)

Nevertheless, as the below extract shows, the drastic 2011 festival cuts acted as a motor at a time of crisis, eliciting again a sacrificial impulse in order to *safeguar[d]* the greater-good, the LLGFF:

> *Last year [2011] **we helped out as much as we could**. We **gave them** an awful lot of films. A large portion of the features they screened actually came from us... more so than we would normally. **And more so than they would normally** because I think they didn't really... **there wasn't a lot of effort put into last year's festival**.*
>
> (Participant 11)

It is clear that gifting labour and self-sacrifice are ubiquitous elements across numerous facets of the successful enactment of the LLGFF. Arguably, there are three principal and, at times, concurrent rationales that underlie this apparently selfless commitment to the festival's continued success. Firstly, a desire to fulfil a duty or uphold 'citizenship', as a member of the wider LGBTQ population whom the festival purportedly benefits. Secondly, adherence to a festival-elite group-norm of seemingly altruistic dedication in order to maintain a position within the inner-circle. Finally, this behaviour is propelled by a desire to present an image of oneself as an honourable member of the interpenetrating festival communities. It is in this final regard and also in the articulation of efforts undertaken under the first two rationales, that the primary activities of *self-sacrificing for the greater-good* become 'stories' or artefacts utilised in *positioning self* as a deserving and worthy member of the festival-elite. Nevertheless, the following excerpt, from a festival staff-member who has considerable contact with the volunteers, presents a more encouraging outlook: 'I think some **of the volunteers don't necessarily want to get into this work**, which is really good because that means that **their motivation is purely altruistic**. They are **not here to try to impress and get a job**' (Participant 5).

The exploration of the above three practices unveils three key aspects of the processes that contribute to the negotiation of professional-identity and the *positioning [of] self* as a valid member of the festival-elite (or a valid member-to-be). It is the continuous re-enactment of these practices that continually re-presents individual agents as worthy of inclusion within the 'gates' of the festival and meriting inclusion within the bounds of particular tiers of the festival-elite, and, therefore, grants them access to the arguably more fluid channels of socialisation within the festival itself. Furthermore,

the collective enactment of this practice contributes to the order-producing simultaneous cementing and continuous renewal of a multi-dimensional and multi-community hierarchy, consequentially reinforcing the barriers against those whom have not yet found entry.

3.3 - RECRUITING

This category comprises two practices — *exploiting connections* and *employing insiders & formalizing roles* — discussed below, which serve as tributary channels that mould recruitment, both formal and informal, to both the festival and its inner core. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these two practices are shown in Figure 35 overleaf.

EXPLOITING CONNECTIONS:
UTILISING FESTIVAL AND INDUSTRY CONTACTS

Further to the comprehensive application procedure for volunteers summarized in 3.1, the majority of voluntary staff interviewed stated that prior to their application they already had a professional or personal contact involved with the festival *[4.1 Professional Networking]*. Moreover, these participants indicated that they believed this was also the case for most of those successful in securing a position. The following extract describes one volunteer's journey:

> *I was one of the Ladyfest London*[132] *organisers in 2008, doing the film programming. I thought about getting involved in the LLGFF.* ***They don't really recruit volunteers*** *so Kanchi Wichmann*[133]*, who I was working with,* ***gave me the contact****. I* ***got in touch with*** *Helen de Witt*[134] ***and that was it****. [...] Certainly the people I have known that have joined since then have* ***come in through a personal contact****.* ***I've referred somebody****. Another colleague* ***met Helen at a film festival and applied personally on the spot then and there****.*
>
> (Participant 9)

This extract illuminates a common 'breaking-in' volunteer trajectory that transpires as a consequence of the hyper-interconnected nature of the queer-arts scene in London (and its overlaps with queer social and community groups and the wider film industry) *[4.1*

[132] A community-organised (non-profit) feminist activism, music and arts festival.
[133] Film-director and script-writer, her first feature-film *Break My Fall* was included in the 2011 LLGFF.
[134] 'Festival Producer' for both the LFF and LLGFF from 2005 to present, now 'Head of Cinemas' at the BFI. Also, notably, has published articles and lectured in Film Studies at Birkbeck College.

Figure 35: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Recruiting'

Professional Networking; 4.2 Community Networking]. This was also evident during fieldwork observation, manifest in the appearance of seasoned names and faces (recognisable to the socialised) with complex and manifold connections to the festival, queer communities, queer cinema and each other. Symbolically, an interview with an industry delegate was interrupted by the arrival of a LLGFF (and 'Fringe!') volunteer with a message for the interviewee from the aforementioned Kanchi Wichmann (who was in the Delegate Centre) regarding another filmmaker.

Crucially, the previous extract also illustrates how formal volunteer-recruitment processes can be somewhat bypassed through the exploitation of existing direct and indirect connections that are already within the bounds of the festival. The below extract presents an interesting example of an historic instance where, lacking an appropriate connection, an individual (now a member of the festival's inner-core) desperately sought out an alternative channel in an attempt to surreptitiously traverse the festival boundaries *[misbehaving]*:

> ***I pretended to be press!*** *[laughs]* ***I actually got a press-pass*** *as a writer for Gingerbeer*[135] *and then SuMay who ran Gingerbeer [found out] and took a dreadful picture of me outside the Retro bar and was like "I'm putting this up on the internet, if you're going to say that you work for us" [laughs]. Then I had to write a column for them... which was fine!* ***It was very cheeky of me but I was just completely obsessed with the idea of being involved!***
>
> (Participant 4)

The exploitation of connections is not limited to those attempting to break into the festival. Those already within the bounds of the festival elite can make use of their own position to recruit personal and professional contacts to the festival inner-circles. For instance, one of the programmers with extensive involvement with queer community and activist groups utilises her contacts for the purposes of drawing in groups to put on events. Similarly, as the below extract demonstrates, this participant utilises industry contacts in order to maximise her *pursui[t of] own interests* in programming BME and feminist queer cinema *[securing the margins]:*

[135] Online lesbian community, with (London-centric) listings and features.

> *Faryal, who has a short called 'What are you looking at?'*[136] *in the festival this year, she's a local filmmaker.* ***I saw the scripts for both of her short films before they were made****. She keeps in touch in that respect... [inquiring tone] "Would this work? Does this work?". That's been really nice.* ***I've been an extra!*** *It's difficult because* ***the women that I know are trying to make films about women of colour****. For example, it's really difficult to get people to be mourners at a Muslim funeral scene in a gay film. So,* ***the usual suspects*** ***end up in... and I happen to be one of the usual suspects*** *for that kind of thing 'cos I don't mind being on screen for that! But* ***it becomes...very intertwined!*** *I've been working* ***helping to promote*** *Pratibha's film, the Alice Walker film.*[137] *[...] Also, I'll try and get works-in-progress if possible. [...]* ***I've shown works-in-progress*** *like the Raincoats film.*[138]
>
> (Participant 4)

It is evident that maintaining relationships with film contacts is useful in developing a better understanding of works available and the needs of the filmmakers, thereby enhancing the ability of this programmer to 'recruit' these filmmakers into the bounds of the festival *[maintaining informal networks]*. Evidently, this is a reciprocal process as the filmmakers can also benefit from expert advice (and a programmer's eye) and exposure from works-in-progress screenings can help to secure further funding. In this sense, and as the above reference to filmmaker Faryal highlights, this mutually-beneficial exploitation may contribute to the filmmaker's further migration inwards towards the inner-tiers of the festival-elite.

Evidently, the successful enactment of *exploiting connections* depends upon the network of contacts available to each individual agent and the willingness of the gatekeeping links in the chain to engage in the activity of this practice. Furthermore, the recruitment processes and structures in place must be sympathetic to recommendations and gatekeepers trustful of the instigator if the enactment of this practice is to enable 'breaking in'. Nevertheless, this exploitation is usually for mutual gain and is a key facet of the LLGFF 'recruitment process' for staff and industry figures.

[136] (Dir: Faryal; UK, 2011).
[137] '*Alice Walker: Beauty in Truth (Work in Progress + Director Interview)*' (Dir: Parmar; USA-UK).
[138] *The Raincoats: Fairytales* (Dir: Birch; UK, 2009), screened as 'Work in Progress + Panel Discussion'.

EMPLOYING INSIDERS & FORMALIZING ROLES

All of the paid festival-staff interviewed shared a common recruitment experience originating in a preceding relationship with the LLGFF. Most had spent several years working for the festival in a voluntary capacity, establishing themselves as a socialised insider and nurturing relationships with influential contacts. It was from this select position that they were then able to formalise their commitment to the LLGFF in a new paid role, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> *I **volunteered** a couple of times and **got to know one of the previous programmers** who became a **good friend** of mine. We worked together on events outside of the festival and **when it was the twentieth festival** [2006] **he asked me to present** a look back over twenty years of queer cinema and twenty years of the festival [...]I think it was a couple of years later that a job came up, they wanted a new programmer. I was like "I think I'm ready, I think I can do this now", and I got the job! **So, from audience member, to volunteer, to guest programmer to programmer**.*

(Participant 2)

In the above narrative, emphasis is placed upon a symbolic key: demonstrating programming acumen. As the following extract from a participant that did not volunteer in a formal sense prior to securing their role highlights, socialisation to particular aspects of queer communities and practical festival and event expertise are also valued,:

> ***I'm a filmmaker** but I think the reason why I got the interview, or one of the strengths of my application, is that before this **I ran a transgender arts festival** for three years. [...] And [...] **I was on the trans representation panel**.[139] That was quite good, I got to sort of show some stuff and I **came to the attention** of Kyle.[140] She might have kind of put a word in for me. I don't know! It all just seemed to come straight after that.*

(Participant 3)

Notably, one participant revealed that the job advert for a programmer role was sent, unsolicited, to her directly by the BFI. When she responded that despite desperately wanting the job she did not fulfil the criteria — three years of relevant film

[139] The 2006 LLGFF 'Recasting Gender' panel examined transgender representation in film and television.
[140] Former programmer, Kyle Stephans.

experience — the reply from the upper echelons of the BFI was "Apply, we want you to apply" (Participant 4). Formalising of roles may not necessarily follow formal recruitment processes to the letter; demonstration of socialisation to festival communities, festival conceptualisations and festival practices is evidently highly valued *[affirming suitability]*. The *current* desire to capture those who show promise by drawing them in from the periphery into progressively inner circles was also articulated in passing during an interview with a festival staff-member: 'We've got one volunteer who is really incredible [...] someone mentioned to me last night "We need, **someone needs to get her a job**! We need to figure out how..."' (Participant 5). Ultimately, unlike *exploiting connections* for the primary purpose of 'breaking-in', the mechanisms discussed above outline the channels through which peripheral members of the festival-organising and -enacting communities are drawn inwards through multi-dimensional concentric layers towards the festival-elite, thus cementing a highly socialised community of festival organisers that act as an anchor of the festivals' continued successful enactment.

The two practices explored above enable appreciation of the order-producing processes that shape recruitment to the festival and the subsequent migration of staff through the overlapping and fluid circles of involvement. Through consideration of these practices, this sub-section illuminates the imbuement of *recruiting* with the propensity for: engaging those already indirectly connected to the festival (at the very least to an individual at the periphery); and retaining and formalising the relationship with those that have already navigated past the festival boundaries. Furthermore, it illuminates this imbuement as an important contributory feature in *safeguarding* the LLGFF through effective *gatekeeping* (that serves to *[minimise] risk* by employing those who are endorsed by connected insiders or through their own actions within a previous iteration of the festival).

3.4 - SUMMARY: INSIGHTS FROM 'PRACTICES OF GATEKEEPING'

The data excerpts presented above demonstrate the significance of *gatekeeping* in the continued enactment of the LLGFF. Consideration of the above practices has illuminated the processes that act to re-create and cement a multi-dimensional and multi-community hierarchy, wherein privileged groups have the capacity to operate as gatekeepers of multiple festival communities, and through which *gatekeeping* is ultimately operationalised. Notably, in controlling access to the progressively elite tiers of the LLGFF, these groups have the power to either grant or deny access to myriad facets of the festival and may ultimately afford membership of festival inner circles to those candidates whom they deem most suitable. As the extracts discussed above highlight, *gatekeeping* operates across festival communities including: the LLGFF 'staffing' entourage, queer filmmakers and wider queer-film industry, and even to the LGBTQ communities and sub-cultures that the festival seeks to serve. Crucially, *gatekeeping* is an important contributory feature in *safeguarding* the LLGFF through *minimising risk*, stimulating growth and maintaining tailored high-standards. Thus, gatekeeping can be considered as an integral facet and cementing mechanism of the continued enactment of the LLGFF in bolstering the high-standards that set it apart from its counterparts *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*.

4: CONNECTING: *INDUSTRY, COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUALS*

"Lesbians don't just live in a lesbian world with lesbian friends and go to lesbian bars and do lesbian things! They do actually have families and work colleagues, neighbours and other friends. And so they come along!"

(Participant 1)

"It's a place where people can come to see themselves really. It's a reflection on people's lives and how people live their lives so... I think that's really the most important thing. That it's kind of a validation for people... to come together, to watch films as a collective group. That's really really important."

(Participant 12)

"I sometimes say 'films are a bit like fish'. You see, when they're fresh they are wonderful and everyone is interested in them. But it's like a fish on a market stall. If it's starting to smell people are less keen and they wonder why it's still on the shelf and hasn't been exposed. Because, films need to live and breathe. They need reviews, they need festival selection. And it's very important for filmmakers getting funding to have evidence that their film has been viewed and appreciated by people who aren't them!"

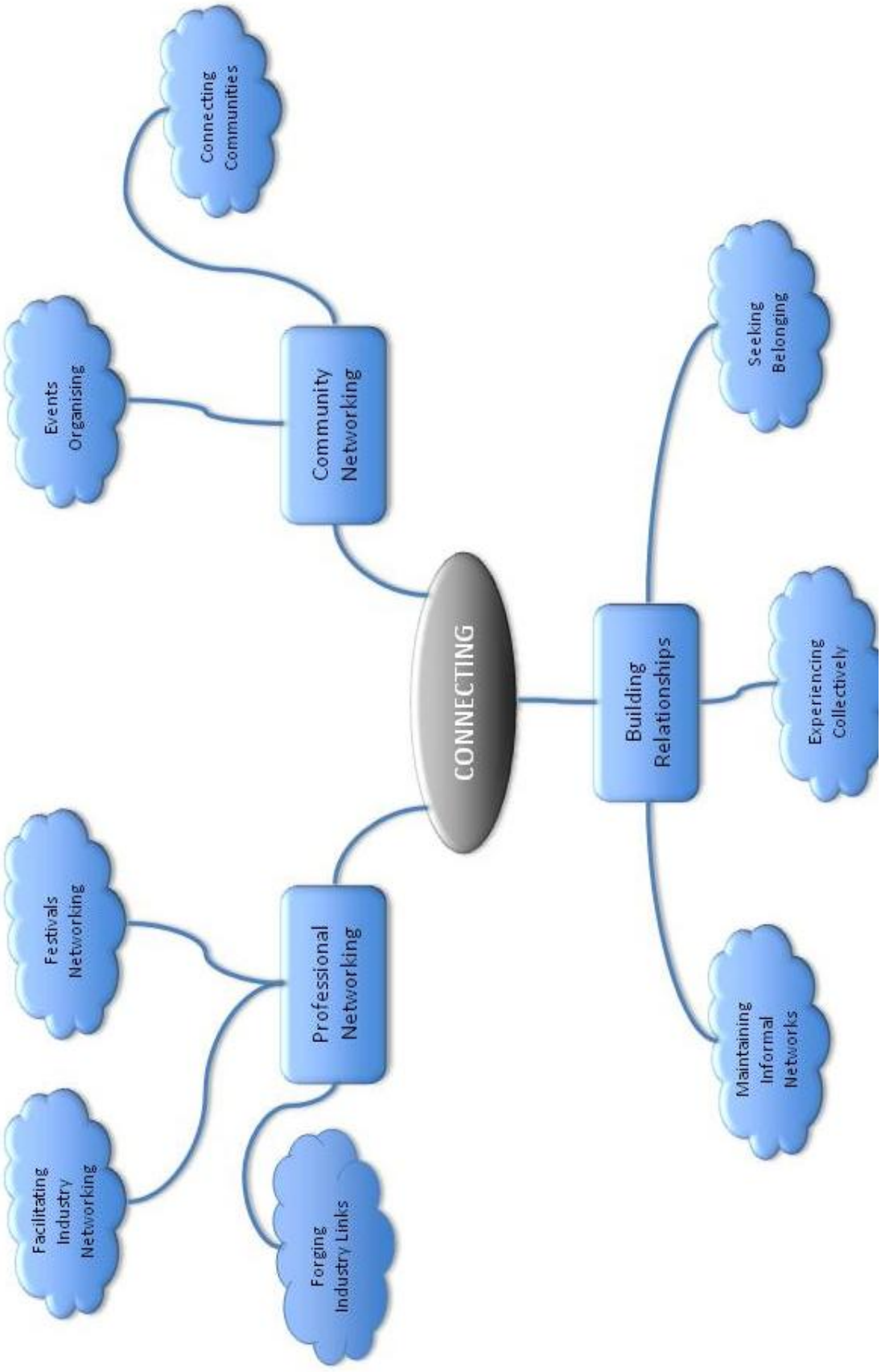
(Participant 1)

"One of the parties that struck a really big chord with me was the first trans event, afterparty event, that I helped participate in and helped to organise and run. That was brilliant! [...] It was a bit of an eye-opener for me but it was a really good fun night!"

(Participant 8)

From the epigraphs on the preceding page a sense can be garnered of the festival's potential in both prompting and fostering the myriad connections that criss-cross the festival and constituent communities in a convoluted and dense web. Accordingly, the fourth theme to be examined in this chapter is 'Connecting'. This thematic grouping comprises three component categories, which will be presented in the following three corresponding sub-sections: (4.1) Professional Networking; (4.2) Community Networking; and (4.3) Building Relationships. These categories, in turn, comprise eight practices, as illuminated in Figure 36 overleaf, which will be discussed in relation to relevant data extracts. Finally, a summary section (4.4) will elaborate upon the theme of 'Connecting'.

Figure 36: Connecting Theme



4.1 - PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

This category comprises three practices — *forging industry links*, *facilitating industry networking* and *festivals networking* — discussed below, which serve to enable the connection of disparate elements in the complex wider web of the queer-film industry. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 37 overleaf.

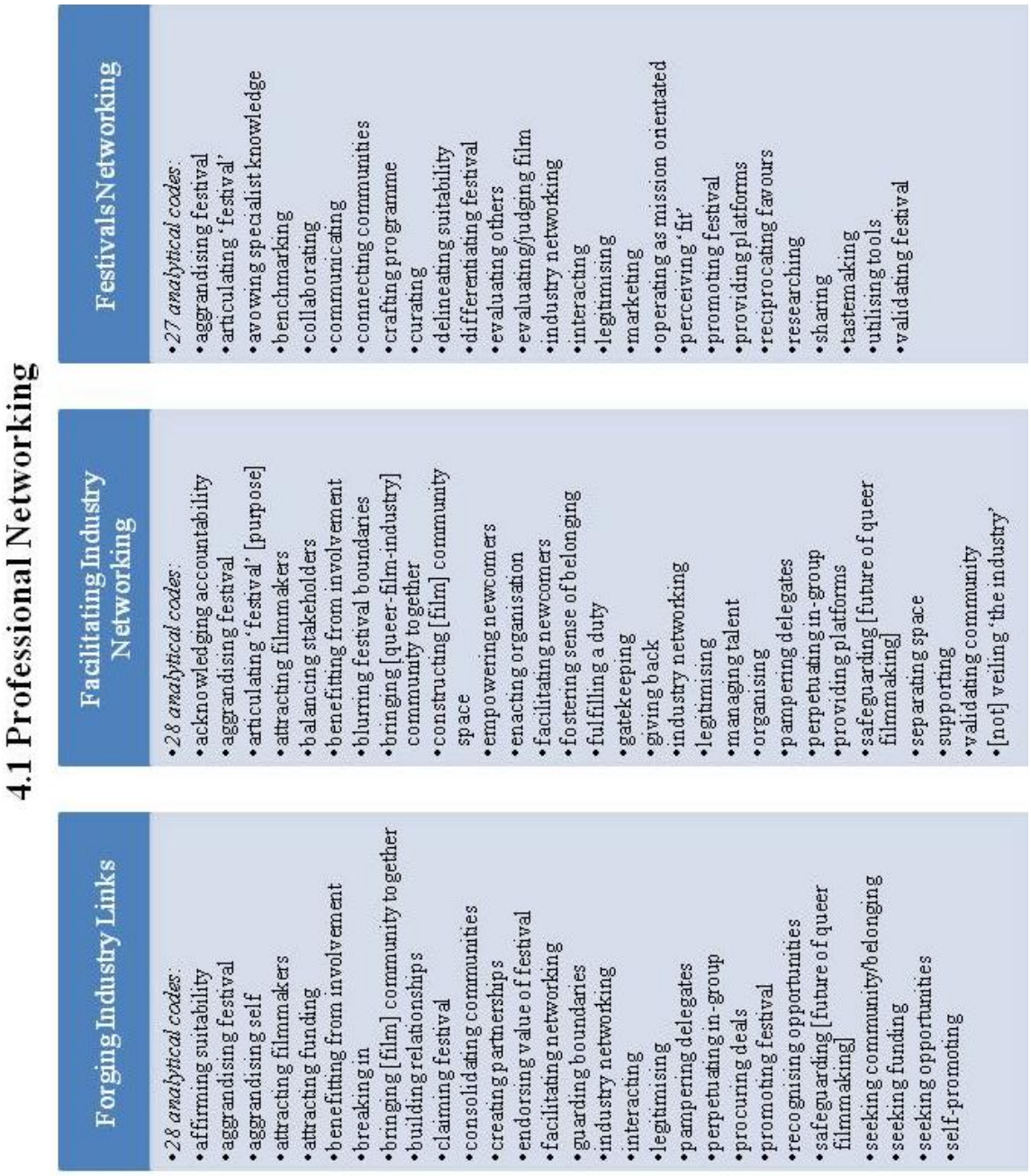
FORGING INDUSTRY LINKS:
THE FESTIVAL AS A FERTILE TERRAIN OF THE QUEER FILM INDUSTRY

When considered in its entirety, the worldwide queer-film-festival circuit is sizeable. However, this shrinks significantly when festivals dominated by community-centred ideologies (rather than artistic and professional ones, and often to the neglect of showcasing contemporary films) are discounted.[141] Within the UK, the LLGFF represents one of very few dedicated queer-film festivals (i.e. not cross-arts). Notably, it is markedly longer in duration than other dedicated festivals and is the only one able to offer such comprehensive industry provision *[2.1 Positioning Festival; (re)defining scope]*. In the absence of a full calendar of professional festivals that would provide a 'travelling' geographical centre for the queer-film industry in the UK, for the ten days of its enactment the LLGFF becomes *the* thriving hub and symbolic axle of the British queer-film industry. As will be discussed in *festivals networking* however, the LLGFF is also a major player in the international queer-film-festival circuit and is one of the key stations or points of connection for the global queer-film industry.

Given this prominent role as a point of connection, it is unsurprising that the

[141] At the time of fieldwork, there were estimated to be around 180 significant LGBTQ film festivals globally (Participant 1; Loist & Zielinski, 2012: 61 – referencing queer programmer Mel Pritchard's website <http://www.queerfilmfestivals.org>). There are currently more than 220 listed on this website [February 2014]. This list, although comprehensive, only includes festivals of relative significance (size, level of organisation, professionalism, renown etc.) and so the global total of LGBTQ-interest film festivals is likely to be significantly higher.

Figure 37: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Professional Networking'



LLGFF provides a crucial *professional networking* opportunity. Aside from filmmakers, the festival plays host to around eighty accredited industry delegates (Participant 5), such as distributors, TV buyers, media representatives and programmers from other festivals *[festivals networking]*. The following extract demonstrates the importance placed upon maintaining a presence at this focal point: 'even if we can't afford to bring people over, sometimes **filmmakers pay for themselves** because they enjoy the experience and the **networking**' (Participant 1).

In particular, the festival offers a platform to support the earliest stages of *forging industry links* between filmmakers and distributors, as the below extract illuminates:

> *From our [distributor] perspective there might be **some filmmakers that we'd like some members of the team to chat with and get to know a bit better**. And, the other way is that **it gives up-and-coming filmmakers the opportunity to chat to us** on a more personal level.*
>
> (Participant 11)

In addition to this fostering of *specific* professional relationships, the LLGFF also offers an individual professional point of connection to the general wider queer-film industry. This is illustrated in the below response from the same participant to the interviewer question 'Which aspects of the festival do you feel are the most important?':

> *From a **personal perspective**, I think it is... **to a degree the networking thing**... I can't do too many of them but it is **nice to encounter new people, new thoughts, new ideas**. As long as you don't get **stalkers**! Which happens from time to time! [laughs] So... the networking can be really good. **And just helping people out in general, it's nice to have that opportunity**.*
>
> (Participant 11)

It is pertinent to note that the *forging [of] industry links* is not, however, restricted to the queer-film industry but also extends to the LLGFF's capacity to operate as a point of connection for the festival's inner organisational core with the wider queer-film industry, as the below excerpt demonstrates:

> ***I tend to do most of my research by making contacts at festivals, at our festival**. A number of the things **I chased** over the last year were made by **people who have shown at the festival before or who were here as delegates**.*
>
> (Participant 4)

In this sense, the LLGFF is well placed to capitalise on the networking opportunities emanating from this fertile terrain of its own making.

For a disparate and displaced queer-film industry, the annual iteration of the LLGFF is one of very few symbolic moments in time when the industry comes together in both a physical and iconic space of productivity. However, as previously discussed in 3.1, the enactment of this practice is delimited by access to the spaces in which the activities of this practice — meeting industry members and nurturing nascent relationships — takes place *[3.1 Protecting Membership]*. The extent to which the festival acts to support this practice is explored in the following ancillary practice of *facilitating industry networking*. Ultimately, the order-producing enactment of *forging industry links* at the LLGFF mirrors an analogous structure of *professional networking* and connections that permeates the wider queer-film industry. The festival, however, has the potential to gradually shape this structure through the decisions made and opportunities granted *[reaching out]*. Nevertheless, the capacity of the LLGFF to mould this structure through the activities of fostering *professional networking* is restricted by a particular practical implication: the volatility of some filmmakers' desire to forge links in this arena or in another that they consider to be potentially more lucrative, the wider non-specialist field. This phenomena, previously mentioned in *recognising limitations* (2.1) and further explored in *contesting ownership* (5.2), is encapsulated in the following extract: 'If you asked a filmmaker "Would you like to be in the LFF or the LLGFF?" They are going to choose the LFF. They want the biggest exposure, the big prestige... I'd feel the same about a film of mine' (Participant 3).

FACILITATING INDUSTRY NETWORKING: *THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE FESTIVAL*

Further to the LLGFF's key position as a crucial connection point for *forging industry links*, discernible efforts are made by the festival-organising communities to actively facilitate industry and professional networking during the LLGFF itself. These efforts are most overtly manifest in the use of space, organisation of specialist-events, and the granting of provisions and privileges to the film-industry elite. Furthermore, the commitment of the festival to these aims is most symbolically apparent in the employment of a dedicated Industry Coordinator. Specialist events to promote industry networking are organised on a daily basis; some of these efforts are illustrated in the below excerpt:

> *[...]* ***giving them a platform to connect and network****. We host...* ***we try to have some sort of event every night*** *for filmmakers where they can meet each other and they can meet industry people. [...]* ***We invite all the filmmakers and all the industry delegates****... we just kind of get them in a room and give them some wine and just move around the room and* ***try to introduce people to each other****. But it happens anyway.* ***A lot of cards get exchanged and numbers and screeners***[142]*. I think it is hugely important for the filmmakers.*
>
> (Participant 5)

The above excerpt also illuminates the active stewardship of the festival in fostering connections through purposive introductions *[3.1 Protecting Membership]*.

Further to the networking and socialising events indicated above and the private parties described in 3.1, the festival programme also includes, for those awarded a place, educational events followed by networking receptions *[1.3 Perpetuating through Education; guarding boundaries]*. These events are notable in *facilitating industry networking* as, if successful in 'gaining entry', they are one of few possible points of connection for those on the periphery to the queer-filmmaking elite. For instance, the *Now We Are Here: Professional Development for Filmmakers* event featured successful

[142] A DVD copy of a filmic work, used by filmmakers for festivals submissions and, in this regard, in attempts to secure a distribution partner.

queer filmmakers such as Pratibha Parmar[143] and important industry figures such as the director of a major LGBTQ-distribution company.

The Delegate Centre is a fundamental festival space, utilised almost exclusively for the purposes of *facilitating industry networking* and fulfilling industry expectations, the importance of which is demonstrated in the following extract: 'I think it's really important for LGBT filmmakers, which is partly why there was **such a fuss last year when we didn't have** the Delegate Centre. Because **people do get picked up here**... **distributors will come and deals get made**' (Participant 4). Within this space delegates can access privileged facilities (such as the viewing library[144]) and, via their dedicated Industry Coordinator, 'book' one of the free-to-industry tickets set aside from public sale for each screening. I was invited into this secure and privileged space during the festival to conduct two interviews with senior members of the festival-organising community, whereupon I was able to observe the structure and style of this area. Far from the functional space that I had imagined, the area was large and open with practical aspects banished to the back of the room. Instead, large sofas and seating areas dominated the space. The atmosphere was welcoming and jovial and a free bar (predominantly serving tea and coffee in the afternoons) ensured that the area was always busy with industry delegates intermingling across the seating areas. Nevertheless, a volunteer remained posted by the door at all times *[guarding boundaries]*. Arguably, this presents another example of a separation of space and of the two main festival communities: the queer-film industry and the LGBTQ paying audiences drinking coffees in the Benugo bar downstairs.

In addition to the practice activities and outcomes outlined above, the LLGFF facilitates a form of passive networking between filmmakers and the media (both queer and mainstream) by raising the profile of industry figures, as the below extract shows:

> *Putting a film in [LLGFF] gives you **huge exposure online and in the printed programme**. It **will get written about** in the **gay press** and maybe **blogged***

[143] Parmar directed noted modern lesbian 'classic' *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (UK, 2006). Her film *Alice Walker: Beauty in Truth* (UK-USA, 2013) recently aired on BBC Four following inclusion as a work-in-progress in the 2012 festival.
[144] An area containing dedicated viewing stations for the exclusive use of industry delegates (i.e. queer media, distributors, TV buyers, programmers from other festivals etc.) to watch 'screeners' of films that they were unable to attend.

***about** or some **exposure in more mainstream circles**... and **the audience talk**!*
*They **tweet** and they are on **Facebook**. **If your film is here it will go everywhere**!*

(Participant 1)

The capacity of the festival to raise awareness of a particular filmmaker or filmic work lies in their inclusion within the programme: synonymous with a BFI-endorsement that, when coupled with the festival's position as an arbiter of queer tastes, places them on the map of the 'best in new queer cinema' *[delineating suitability; benchmarking/ differentiating festival; festivals networking]*. Furthermore, the festival has a dedicated Press Office, which builds buzz around the programme through a Press Launch, develops a press and media strategy (Participant 2) and coordinates interviews for queer media and mainstream radio, news programmes[145] and newspapers.

Ultimately the LLGFF plays a crucial order-producing role in *safeguarding* the future of queer filmmaking by offering not just a point of *connecti[on]* for the queer–film industry but by also recognising the need for and benefit of *facilitating industry networking*. Evidently, the LLGFF not only recognises this need but also more than adequately caters for it in the range of dedicated industry events and services outlined above. A recent example of a barrier to this practice is the cancellation of industry services at the 2011 festival following the cuts. However, the backlash prompted reconsideration of the intangible worth of this dimension of the festival and resulted in its full reinstatement for 2012 *[answering back]*. In essence, the LLGFF operates as a vital connection point and as a 'springboard for further creative collaborations' (Participant 6).

FESTIVALS NETWORKING:
THE FESTIVALS CIRCUIT IN ACTION

Throughout consideration of the LLGFF, it is imperative to acknowledge that the enactment of the festival does not occur at a dislocated site outwith the temporal and

[145] See the aforementioned example in 'representing communities' (2.3).

cultural bonds of the wider queer-film industry, queer communities and cultures. Similarly, the festival does not operate in isolation from the global queer-film-festival circuit. In fact, as will be argued, the enactment of the festival occurs within and with reference to a wider web of festivals and their respective spheres of influence. The connection between the LLGFF and other global queer festivals of renown is most patently manifest in the processes and interactions underpinning programming research at the LLGFF, as the following extract demonstrates:

> *When I get time to **see what new movies are on the festival circuit**, I **start a document**. [...] We do get **sent other people's programmes**. You go through all the festivals and [make] a big request list. **Most festivals provide source lists,** so they've got **e-mail addresses** and you just put together a massive **excel spreadsheet of titles** that you want requesting in. [...] And **we travel to other festivals**! We try all of us to get to a different queer-film festival in the year. I tend to be sent to Seattle in October because **enough time has passed** from what we would have had submitted to our festival [...] **that it gets a new crop of films** so I can generally pick some stuff up out there that hasn't shown anywhere else.*
>
> (Participant 2)

The above extract highlights several dimensions of this practice. Firstly, festival programmes can be understood as artefacts. These stabilise the 'meaning' or identity of a particular festival or, of course, cause disruption to an existing perception if it does not correlate with expectations *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*. Secondly, external artefacts such as the programmes of other festivals shape the programming practices at the LLGFF. This (anchoring and risk-minimising) mechanism operates through tacit acknowledgement of collective consensus about particular titles (i.e. that a film warrants inclusion in a high-brow queer-film festival) and also regarding which queer community concerns the film industry (and festival circuit) should be engaging with *[recognising stakeholders]*. Thirdly, in relation to the aforementioned collective consensus, the inclusion of films already programmed by 'peer' festivals represents a framework of assurance that has a risk-avoidance function in re-presenting a title that has already been 'approved' by an established reputable festival *[strategising and avoiding risk]*. Fourthly, this extract unveils the importance of strategising in visit-based *festival networking* in order to maximise its utility. Finally, a further group-norm is revealed in the expectation that festivals engage in reciprocal efforts for the collective good, for

instance by posting their programmes to each other. Similarly, the labour of creating a source list is not essential within any individual festival but such provision is extremely helpful to festival-circuit peers *[sacrificing (for greater good)]*.

Equally, other festivals look to the LLGFF programme during their own respective programming periods. This reciprocal arrangement is alluded to in the extract below:

> *If your film is here it will go everywhere [...], we're a **portal festival**. There are over 180 lesbian and gay film festivals around the world and **they all look to what we do, and we look at other festivals to see what they do**.*
>
> (Participant 1)

Significantly, the above extract also attests the importance and influence of the LLGFF within the wider festival circuit, as previously discussed in *benchmarking/ differentiating festival*. This sentiment is elaborated upon in the below extract, which is testament to the standing of the LLGFF and its capacity to shape and even disrupt the aforementioned collective consensus:

> *Our programme gets followed by a lot of people. I know from experience that **if I programme something that hasn't shown anywhere else, got passed by,** it's been around for a while... **And then I've picked it up. Then it's shown at maybe twenty different festivals after that**. From that respect, if you are showing at London, it is one of a handful of **festivals that people look to**. [...] Which... really is a **position of influence**. It is important that when people get in the programme that they will get offers elsewhere.*
>
> (Participant 4)

This extract lays bare the ripple-like effects that emanate from the LLGFF, as a significant taste-making epicentre within the wider festival circuit. Furthermore, this example also reveals the underlying systems and processes through which the group norms that ultimately underpin collective consensus are moulded in the long-term by ever-shifting community concerns/tastes/opinions (i.e. reflecting the aforementioned shift over time in the relationship between feminism and pornography).

Evidently, the LLGFF is both a key point of connection for the global queer-film industry and is also inextricably intertwined within the wider circuit. This entwinement

shapes the practices and identity of the LLGFF but, simultaneously, the festival has the capacity to shape the wider circuit. Furthermore, the routine utilisation of programmes from other festivals as a research tool — across the festival circuit — is an order-producing element that contributes to the continual re-establishment of the overarching structure of the festival circuit.

The three practices explored above provide frames for understanding some of the mechanisms that underpin and also enable *professional networking*, both within the bounds of the LLGFF and beyond. The collective consideration of these practices illuminates the anchoring connections between multiple layers of the queer-film industry and the essential role that the LLGFF plays in shoring up this complex web. Simultaneously, flowing from the bolstering effects of these practices upon the wider queer-film industry is propagation and cultivation of industry relationships and filmmaking individuals that, in turn, will be critical to the LLGFF's continued success *[1 Safeguarding]*.

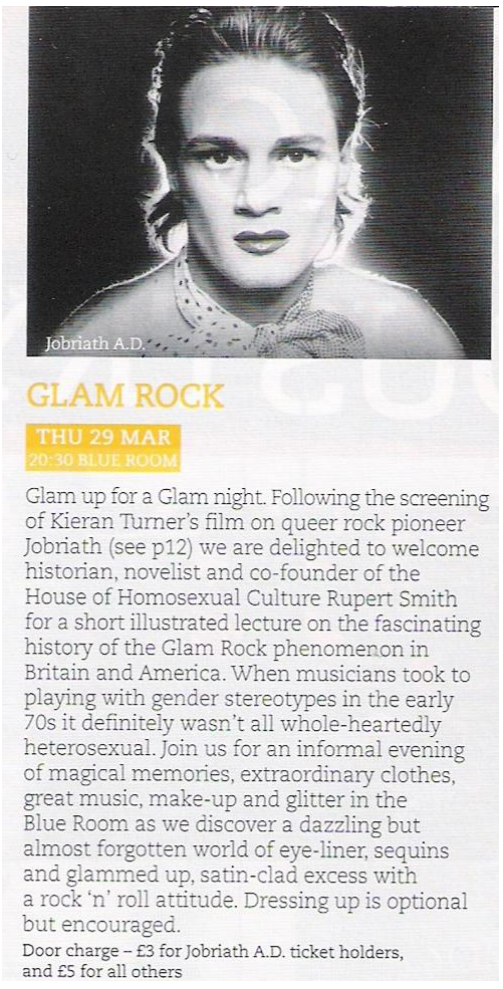
4.2 - COMMUNITY NETWORKING

This category comprises two practices — *events organising* and *connecting communities* — discussed below, which serve to honour the fulfilment of expectations arising from the community-centred conceptualisation of the LLGFF outlined in 2.1. Furthermore, these practices also serve to connect disparate elements of LGBTQ communities and, through exploration of their enactment, cast light upon the relationship between the queer-film industry and their audiences. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these two practices are shown in Figure 39 overleaf.

EVENTS ORGANISING

Further to the industry-based events discussed in 4.1, a striking proportion of the festival programme is dedicated to (free) community-based events *[(re)defining scope]*. These events are diverse in nature and cater for a wide variety of interests and community sub-cultures *[maintaining multiplicity; recognising stakeholders]*. Some are symbolic of attempts to *reac[h] out* to younger generations (e.g. festival party nights), whilst others *reac[h] out* to activist communities, educators, trans communities and LGBT parents, for example. Particular events can also be considered as celebratory of elements of queer cultures or as contributing to *preserving [our collective] history and tradition[s]*, as evidenced by the enticing festival copy shown alongside in Figure 38.

Figure 38: Programme extract (BFI, 2012c: 31)


Jobriath A.D.

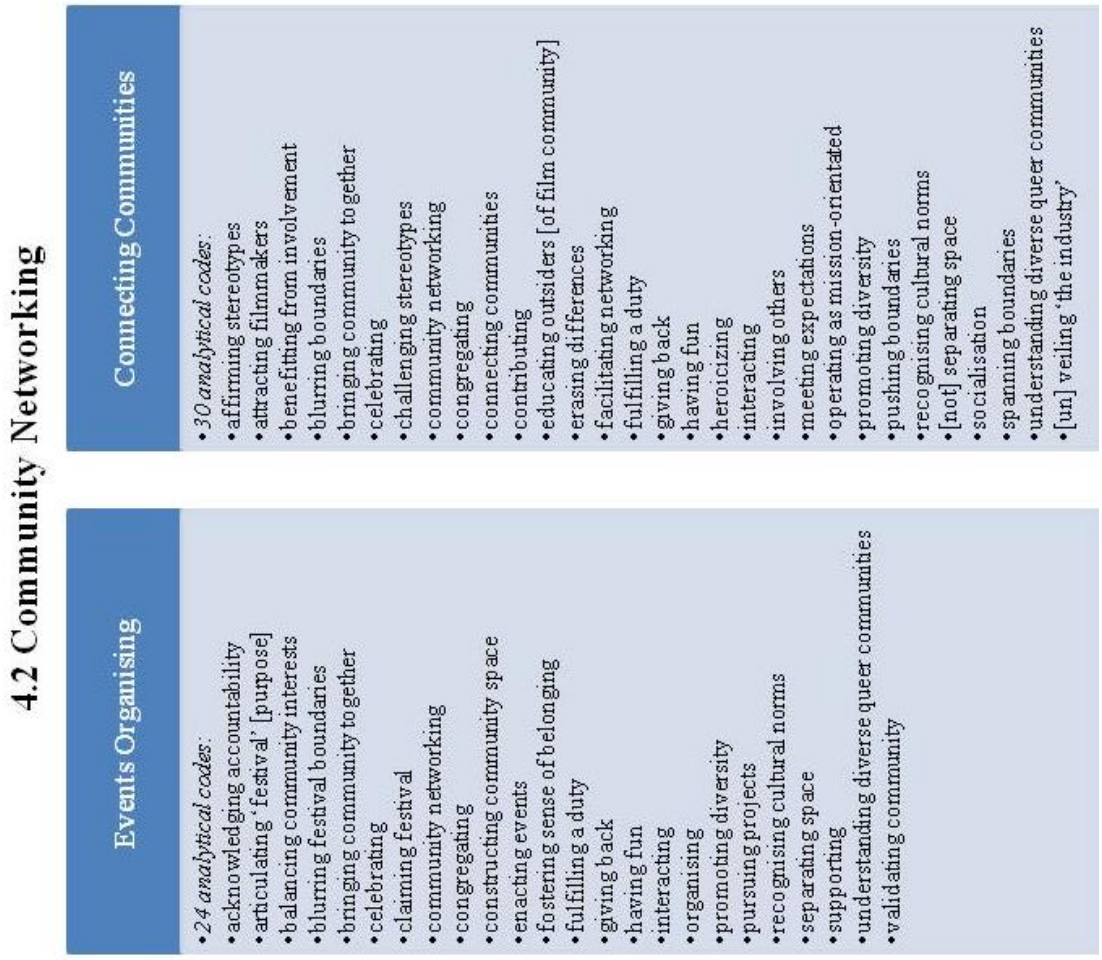
GLAM ROCK

THU 29 MAR
20:30 BLUE ROOM

Glam up for a Glam night. Following the screening of Kieran Turner's film on queer rock pioneer Jobriath (see p12) we are delighted to welcome historian, novelist and co-founder of the House of Homosexual Culture Rupert Smith for a short illustrated lecture on the fascinating history of the Glam Rock phenomenon in Britain and America. When musicians took to playing with gender stereotypes in the early 70s it definitely wasn't all whole-heartedly heterosexual. Join us for an informal evening of magical memories, extraordinary clothes, great music, make-up and glitter in the Blue Room as we discover a dazzling but almost forgotten world of eye-liner, sequins and glammed up, satin-clad excess with a rock 'n' roll attitude. Dressing up is optional but encouraged.

Door charge – £3 for Jobriath A.D. ticket holders, and £5 for all others

Figure 39: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Community Networking'



This sort of event evidently plays a celebratory 'educative' role in perpetuating community history through *connecting [disparate generations of LGBTQ] communities* across temporal divisions *[remembering; sustaining cross-generational learning; educating outsiders (and us); engaging with stereotypes]*. In a similar vein, several films are followed by an accompanying community event *[(re)defining scope]*, spanning topics which range from celebratory to sombre. Such supplementary events enhance audience members' experience and, as will be further discussed in 'connecting communities', augment the scope of the festival in connecting LGBTQ community organisations and the LGBTQ and LGBTQ-film-industry communities.

The perceived successful cumulative outcome of the successive enactment of *events organising* at the LLGFF is suggested in the below extract from an interview with a queer BME individual *[heroicizing/aggrandising festival]*:

> ***Some of the events that they have organised as part of the film festival have gone to create a greater sense of community and a sense of belonging to****... whatever community that they see themselves as belonging to. For example, some of the trans events that have gone on, some of the families of LGBT people... The festival are really really good at what they do in terms of* ***bringing people together that may otherwise feel quite isolated and may feel that they don't really know where they belong****, they don't know ... what their place in the world is. I think that they [LLGFF] help to* ***build a sense of community and of belonging*** *where ideas can be exchanged. It's a really nice space for people to realise "yeah, I'm not alone".*
>
> (Participant 8)

From the above extract, it can be appreciated that the activities of this practice — the planning and enactment of events — contribute to the *constructi[on of] community space* and thus to the provision of crucial points of connection for disparate and dispersed communities *[seeking belonging]*. However, the capacity of the festival to hold such events is delimited by a number of factors, such as: availability of finance; willingness of community groups/individuals to be involved; and, crucially, socialisation of members of the festival-organising committee to both queer concerns and to relevant community groups/individuals that could co-organise appropriate events. For instance, the aforementioned Glam Rock lecture was delivered by a co-founder of the 'House of Homosexual Culture'; one of the other co-founders was a

festival programmer. Nevertheless, whilst it is impossible to quantify the relevance and success of individual events, it is evident that the cumulative enactment of *events organising* is a key facet in connecting LGBTQ individuals to the wider network of LGBTQ (sub-culture) communities and organisations.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES:
BRINGING TOGETHER SUB-CULTURES, INDUSTRY AND AUDIENCES

As previously outlined in 1.2, the collective queer populace comprises diverse and evolving sub-cultures (in themselves fractured along multiple lines) with permeable and transient boundaries. Thus, within any oft-cited 'segment' of 'the gay community' (e.g. lesbians or 'gay men'), there exists an inestimable variety of constituent sub-cultures, concerns, identities and interests (all of which may, indeed, overlap across 'segments'). Whilst most queer cultural events may not appeal to a broad spectrum of queer communities, the LLGFF is a seasoned hand at enticing diverse groups of individuals to congregate around one complex physical space: the LGBTQ-occupied BFI. Their success in spatially connecting divergent cultures is apparent to even the casual observer in the evident diversity of those wandering the corridors and social spaces of the BFI (and also congregating in the immediate outdoor spaces of the Southbank) during the festival. Furthermore, these connections are also evident at the level of an individual film or event. The following extract provides an evocative example of (at least) two seemingly divergent sub-cultures connecting in one single auditorium under a classic queer cultural artefact, the musical:

> *I was at a party and I said "We've got **Sing-along** Sound of Music, I'm really looking forward to it". Someone said "That will never work! Do you really think people are going to sing along to Sound of Music?" and I said "Watch this!". There were forty people in the room and I started singing "Doe-a-deer" and the whole room joined in! [...] **I knew that it was going to work**! And **it was a completely magical event that could *only* have happened here [BFI]**. The Sound of Music is a wonderful film and to be able to sing along with it... and to have the **dress up competition**! You might say "Well, **what's queer about it?" but there is a lot of sub-text in there**. And, there are lots of **wonderful repartee between the audience and the screen**. There's one where*

> *Christopher Plummer is rubbing a whip on his thigh as he is walking along with the Baroness, Eleanor Parker, and* ***an old drag queen shouted out "he's camper than her!"*** *[both laugh].* ***It sold faster than some skinhead pornography film****! [...] But,* ***the people in the box office said "we don't understand! People seem to be booking for both! The skinhead film and Sing-along Sound of Music!"*** *[laughs].* ***But, as I said, we are a broad church****!*
>
> (Participant 1)

The above extract also highlights the socialisation of the programmer to queer cultures, and their tacit understanding that the (socialised) wider queer community would share a common implicit understanding of such sub-text *[experiencing collectively; engaging with stereotypes]*. Similarly, this extract conveys how a lack of socialisation led the (BFI-employed) regular box-office staff to expect that overt community distinctions would be reflected in concrete film preferences.

Given the scarcity of queer-film festivals in the UK with extensive industry provision, the LLGFF provides an almost unique point of connection between the queer-film industry and their UK audiences. Furthermore, most 'queer films' do not achieve cinematic distribution (at least not outwith a limited art-house or independent-cinema-based run) and instead are primarily 'consumed' via DVD purchase or online streaming, a factor which further disconnects and isolates these two communities. The significance of the festival as an opportunity for filmmakers, therefore, is conveyed in the extract below, which describes a Q&A session that followed a film screening:

> ***Lots of the audience stayed and were really engaged****... people were laughing, enjoying it, asking questions...* ***and it feels like a discussion****. [...]* ***The filmmaker was really open*** *about how she made the film: the process, the money and the mechanics of it****.*** *Which, actually,* ***people always want to know****. People like that, when they [filmmakers] aren't defensive about that sort of stuff. She told everyone the budget and where the budget went.* ***You feel like then you are kind of part of it****. Also, [...] she was* ***telling all these kind of behind-the-scenes things*** *that she'd done. [...] She said* ***it was great to be able to see how people understood it, how it was received, to talk to people afterwards****. So, it was really useful on lots of levels And also for someone like her* ***to see how people in the community view her film****.*
>
> (Participant 3)

By the same token, the prospect of meeting filmmakers and learning more about the industry is valued by the festival audiences and, demonstrably, the Q&A sessions were universally very well attended. The sessions attended as an observer-as-participant usually ran for the full-length of time allotted and had a high-level of audience engagement. This was particularly evident in sessions following more sombre films or those that examined issues of interest to a wide variety of queer communities, such as: religion; queer BME London; coming out in the country-music industry; queer histories; and the queer underground within the Islamic Republic of Iran.[146] Audience questions can be broadly classified into two categories: narrative/content and motivation-based queries; or, secondly, filmmaking processes and funding concerns. Notably, given the language employed by some of those posing the second category of questions, it was evident that they had at least a loose association with the film industry and some were recognisable (to those socialised) industry figures.

In the absence of an abundance of cross-culture large-form queer-arts festivals in the UK, the LLGFF can be understood as a cultural lynchpin *connecting* not just scattered elements of the queer populace but also linking queer communities with those filmmakers that seek to explore our cultures/histories. As alluded to above, the festival also has the capacity to bring together distinct pockets of queer communities at an individual film or event, opening up educational, dialogue-promoting and community-building opportunities *[1.2 Protecting Festival Communities; educating outsiders (and us)]*. However, this practice outcome is bound by the interest of certain sub-cultures in attending the festival (e.g. as participant four suggested, young clubbers) and is further restricted by the extent to which these elements are willing to engage with those events/films that lie outwith their direct interests.[147] Nevertheless, the LLGFF is an important point of connection across queer communities, a space where LGBTQ individuals from all walks of life come together; indeed, it offers a unique chance to intermingle with the queer glitterati. In just one iteration of the festival I was excited to come into close contact or cross paths with noted lesbian filmmakers (e.g. Lisa Gornick

[146] Respectively, *Love Free or Die* (Dir: Alston; USA, 2010), *Stud Life* (Dir: Campbell X; UK, 2012), *Wish Me Away* (Dir: Birleffi & Kopf; USA, 2011), *Vito* (Dir: Schwarz; USA, 2011) and *Circumstance* (Dir: Keshavarz; USA-Iran-Lebanon, 2011).
[147] Notably, with reference to the two main festival audiences, of the films attended during fieldwork 'gay-interest' films attracted a more mixed audience than 'lesbian-interest' films.

and Campbell X), queer cultural figures (e.g. Stella Duffy and Will Young), queer activists (e.g. Peter Tatchell) and even BBC newsreader Jane Hill (but unfortunately not Stephen Fry who had been promoting the festival via Twitter). Finally, the meaning and significance of this practice is conveyed in the below extract:

> ***London feels very un-community focused for the rest of the year**. The queer community is really **disparate**... I know not everyone comes to the film festival but a lot of people that you don't ever see anywhere else come out for it. And a lot of different **groups come together**. I feel like it's probably the most... **mixed space**.*
>
> (Participant 4)

In summary, the exploration above of these two interconnected practices enables appreciation of the LLGFF's role as a vital point of connection both within communities *[cultivating communities]* and between them. These practices not only serve to honour the fulfilment of expectations arising from the community-centred conceptualisation but also re-affirm its relevance. Furthermore, in bringing together elements of LGBTQ communities and both eliciting and consolidating connections and relationships between and within them, the LLGFF arguably prompts further ripples of connection outwards into queer communities, community organisations, the film industry and beyond.

4.3 - BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

This category comprises three practices — *seeking belonging*, *experiencing collectively* and *maintaining informal networks* — discussed below, which serve to connect individuals to and consolidate their relationships with: like-minded groups (i.e. sub-cultures); our shared histories, traditions and cultures; and also to each other. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 40 overleaf.

SEEKING BELONGING :
THE FESTIVAL AS POINT OF ACCESS TO COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES

As previously discussed, LGBTQ communities are propagated in the absence of familial structures and geographically-centred communities with cross-generational mechanisms of cultural transmission *[cultivating communities]* (see 1.2, and sub-section 2.3 of Chapter II). Furthermore, as highlighted in the final extract of 4.2, queer communities are both fractured and scattered, lacking concrete points of connection. Compounding this problem for those seeking to connect with kindred elements of queer society, potential community-organised points of connection — social groups, 'regular' events, bars and spaces of consumption, online communities and groups, websites etc. — are often ephemeral in nature, fading away after a brief (or sometimes long-lived) blossom as their relevance or popularity subsides. Of course, new 'points' are always emerging but the LLGFF is conspicuous as an enduring major site, outwith the established 'scene' (i.e. prides, pink triangles etc.), where individuals can gain access to many of the myriad elements of a complex community under one roof. The following extract illustrates the LLGFF's importance to those *seeking [a sense of] belonging*:

> *[It's] a **space** where they can **meet other** gay men and women, trans, bisexual, that serves as **a different space to what they may have seen** already out there, that they may not be able to relate to or don't want to get involved in. It's **alternative spaces that offer a refreshingly different perspective or way of***

Figure 40: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Building Relationships'

getting involved with or interacting with other LGBT people.

(Participant 8)

The festival further has a role in *connecting* individuals with their like-minded peers. Arguably, the common thread linking most festival-goers is an interest, albeit amateur in many cases, in queer cinema. Thus, the festival also operates as an entry point to queer cinephilia for those unsocialised to LGBTQ film and also to those peripheral would-be-cinephiles who wish to broaden and deepen their knowledge. On a related note, for those *seeking belonging* to a group of individuals with a deep interest in queer cinema, the festival itself represents a community to seek connection with, as the below extract shows:

> *There are people who come every year and* ***get kind of incorporated into the festival*** *and they're* ***not an industry person***. *They are somebody that comes to see a lot of films but they* ***feel very much a part of it*** *because... they'll* ***have wine with us*** *and* ***chat with us about films*** *and they're not...* ***I hope they don't see the separation there***.

(Participant 3)

The above extract also highlights how those who become socialised into the festival community gradually *buil[d] relationships* with the festival organisers. In a similar vein, the volunteers interviewed almost universally expressed a desire to get involved with (and belong to) the festival-organising community. Furthermore, attempts by the festival to facilitate the *connecti[on]* of individuals *seeking belonging* to their peer groups are particularly manifest in the activities of *events organising*. Prominent examples include the activist-interest *Dyke March* and the provision of a marketing platform for the *Pink Dancers* (lesbian and gay amateur ballroom and Latin American dance group) to acquire new members following a large dance demonstration and 'meet & greet' in the foyer.

In summary, the festival is a nexus of connections and, crucially, offers an entry point for individuals to socialisation with like-minded queer communities and cultures, as illustrated in the following extract:

> *It's a* ***platform to meet other like-minded people*** *[...] It's where LGBT people get a voice, either through stories they personally connect to or through talks*

> *and events etc.* ***People come to see the movies, talks, go to parties and feel connected****. Or on the other side there are* ***filmmakers and activists from different parts of the world that connect, widen the network, collaborate****. It highlights the issues surrounding this community, makes creative talent from the community heard and offers a* ***meeting point*** *as well. […] It's all in the same spirit, we're stronger together, tolerant and able to be what we are.*
>
> (Participant 10)

The above extract demonstrates the volume of potential entry points that co-exist in any single iteration of the festival; entry points that constitute the stepping-stones to the first stages in *building relationships*. Ultimately, without the enactment of *seeking belonging* by festival audiences, the festival's role as a vital point of connection diminishes and thus, the foundations upon which the community-based conceptualisation of the festival (and this aspect of its legitimacy) rests would be shaken. Although some LGBTQ individuals may not actually identify as LGBTQ or may not engage with any elements of the scene (including the festival), a prevalent need and desire to seek out our peers and a prevailing interest in gay cultures and histories ensures the longevity of the festival's already stalwart place as a point of connection *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*.

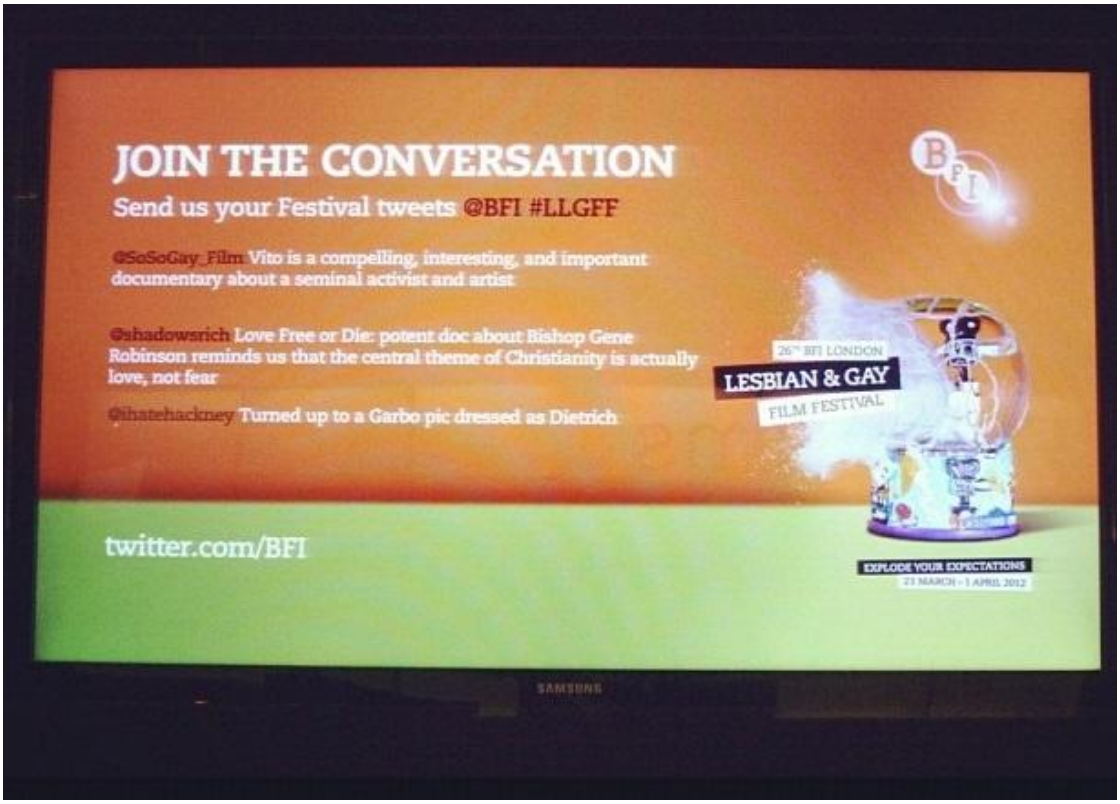
EXPERIENCING COLLECTIVELY: *SOCIALISED GROUP VIEWING, OUR SHARED SENSE OF FESTIVAL ENACTMENT AND HOW WE COMMUNICATE THESE*

Three aspects of the enactment of this practice — our collective entanglement in online dialogues, festival-enacting communities' deep sense of involvement, and collective socialised viewing — are considered below and, ultimately, how these contribute to prompting a collective sense of (the collective enactment of) each festival iteration.

Prior to public release of tickets, many screenings 'sell out' to BFI members. This can, in part, be linked with the continual flow of communications that maintain a constant connection between the BFI and its members. Outwith monthly paid-members' postal updates, for those that are 'online', the BFI sustains a perpetual connection with

members through both scheduled weekly and special-announcement/-event related e-mails. Arguably, it seems likely that a significant proportion of 'online' paid-members also engage with the BFI through social-media channels.[148] In both the run-up to and during the LLGFF itself, staff communicate with all (paid) BFI members (and individuals who have separately noted an interest) through e-mails. Furthermore, they publically engage with the wider online queer community (including BFI members) through social-media 'teaser' statements, pictures and questions inviting answers *[answering back]*. During the festival individuals were invited to 'join the conversation' by 'tweeting' the festival. Furthermore, these tweets were beamed throughout the building and displayed as Twitter feeds on suspended display screens in prominent positions throughout the BFI, as shown in Figure 41 below.[149]

Figure 41: 'Join the Conversation'[150]



Altogether, festival audiences interact with the festival in a multitude of ways, including: talking; posting blogs/comments online; sharing links; tweeting; through

[148] Namely the BFI's Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram accounts (and the LLGFF's Facebook account).
[149] In the absence of a LLGFF Twitter account, individuals used the handle @BFI and the hashtag '#LLGFF'.
[150] (Cropped) image from BFI Instagram account, see <http://instagram.com/p/IrXNs0m98R#>.

queer-media channels and online communities; and via the LLGFF Facebook account, through tagged statuses, audience-member posts and comments on posts by the LLGFF. As we are drawn in online, we are further connected to the festival and also to each other in this online queer-community web. Through our lived experience at the festival we become engaged in the enactment of the festival on a personal level. However, simultaneously, this is further enhanced through our hyper-connectedness — sharing our experiences and those of others — leading to a shared collective sense of each iteration.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this potentially deep sense of involvement in the successful collective enactment of each festival iteration is also shared by more immediately obvious festival communities, such as the festival-enacting community. For instance, over and above the vital bedrock of support offered by volunteer runners and 'fire-fighters', all of those interviewed attested to the central nature of their collective role as a lynchpin of the festival, evidenced in the below extract from a volunteer:

> ***We feel quite important*** *in the running of it...* ***we have a lot of direct contact with filmmakers, distributors, press, the audience that's coming in****... we're really an* ***integral part of running things****. And, the staff do let us know that we're a really important part in making sure things happen.*
>
> (Participant 6)

A further aspect of *experiencing collectively* at the festival has already been touched upon in the preceding sub-section: enjoying and celebrating the shared understanding of sub-texts (e.g. in *The Sound of Music*[151]). Whilst the differential experience of watching a film alone or in a group will be familiar to any cinema-goer, this takes on a distinctive flavour in the context of a queer-film festival, as alluded to in the below extract:

> *In terms of audiences, why it's important to have a specific LGBT-film festival, it's because you want to go to a place where you feel safe, to be who you are, to watch the kind of films you want to watch. I* ***think it's completely different sitting and watching a queer film with a majority straight audience as it is watching a queer film with a majority queer audience.*** *That's not saying*

[151] (Dir: Wise; USA, 1965).

> *anything bad about straight people... some of my best-friends are straight! [laughs]* ***It's just about feeling part of what's up on screen, it's also surrounding you in the audience****.*
>
> (Participant 2)

A collective-queer-viewing experience, on this scale, is almost unique to queer-film festivals and is not replicated even when a LGBTQ-interest film is screened at a mainstream or art-house cinema. The researcher, as an observer-as-participant, both observed and was sub-consciously a part of the collective gasps of horror, laughs at mere looks and choruses of boos and hisses (e.g. at homophobic slights) that are underpinned by our shared tacit understanding of queer cultural artefacts and our shared histories *[engaging with stereotypes; remembering]*. Also, through our socialisation to queer cultures we develop a deeper understanding of the ostensibly less overt sub-texts that often pepper mainstream films. A final significant dimension of *experiencing [film] collectively* is the social aspect and spaces of the festival, which, as the below extract shows, augments the viewing experience through enabling an ideal moment and space in which to engage in reflection upon the film just viewed:

> ***It's completely different to watch a film with loads of queer people than it is to go to just the regular cinema and watch a queer film****. There's* ***a social experience and****...* ***time for discussion or having a drink afterwards****. It's just this sort of people coming together.*
>
> (Participant 12)

Further to providing points of connection for those *seeking belonging*, the successful collective enactment of each festival iteration is experienced collectively by engaged members of constituent festival communities. Furthermore, the tracing of this practice has elucidated how the festival proffers a unique opportunity for our collective socialised viewing of material that engages specifically (and indirectly) with our shared histories, traditions and cultures. This meaning-making practice both relies upon socialisation and also socialises, playing an important (cementing) role in *building [our individual] relationships* with both the LLGFF and wider queer communities.

MAINTAINING INFORMAL NETWORKS

Informal networks and spheres of influence permeate the festival in innumerable ways and with complex multi-layered ripples of effects. The professional entanglements that emanate from a wider field of informal linkages has already been explored in 3.1. Similarly, the importance of building and maintaining professional contacts has been discussed in 4.1. However, with time, the formal aspects of many professional connections may erode and the relationship may transition to one of productive friendship, as the extract below illustrates:

> *I started a company called 'Dangerous to Know'*[152]*, which was the world's first lesbian and gay video company for distributing feature films, on tape, back then. I advertised on one of the programme notes, and some of the films from that festival I picked up for distribution. At that point,* ***I got to know the Festival Director Mark Finch***[153] ***extremely well. We became really good friends over the years.***
>
> (Participant 11)

The above extract elucidates how mission-based networking is augmented through lasting friendship. Indeed, this distributor has since maintained significant involvement with the festival for twenty years.

Similarly, informal networks between volunteers exist both across iterations of the festival and also outwith the festival itself. As previously noted a number of volunteers are also involved with the 'Fringe!' queer-film festival. In many cases the mission-based networking of volunteers around the enactment of the festival evolves into a relationship of friendship and camaraderie, which, as the following excerpt illuminates, presents a further enticement to continued involvement: 'It's **nice to keep in touch with some of the volunteers who I've got to know over the years** who, for whatever reason, I only really get to see at the festival. It's nice to touch base with those people' (Participant 8). Even when an individual 'leaves' the inner sanctum of the festival-elite, the LLGFF leaves an indelible mark and many former staff are never more

[152] Founded 1993, precursor to Peccadillo Pictures (founded in 2000).
[153] Finch was also a friend of participant one and was responsible for encouraging them to get involved in the LLGFF more than twenty-five years ago [see footnote 122].

than a few links away on the web of interconnections. For instance, the maintenance of informal networks is enhanced through storytelling and acknowledgement of achievements between current and former programmers (Participant 2). The maintenance of these informal networks of contacts oils the *gatekeeping* cogs that underpin the festival and enables the *exploit[ation of] connections* (3.3) and facilitation of *protecting membership* (3.1).

The dense network of interconnections that emanates from this practice is manifest in the cross-referencing and multiple apparent connections between elite members of the festival-organising/-enacting and queer-film-industry communities. Networks that have the potential to be both formal and informal spiral out from an LLGFF point-of-origin and can be traced back to reveal a dense pattern of interconnections and mutual references. An interesting example of this lies in the multiplicity of the paths of connection that diverge and converge, within a few short links, between myself, LLGFF programmers, queer filmmakers, 'Fringe!' programmers (and programmers involved with other LGBTQ festivals), community groups and (queer-)film-studies scholars.

The three practices explored above provide frames for understanding some of the means by which the LLGFF operates as a vital point of connection for individuals, providing crucial links to kindred groups, our shared cultures and also to each other. Furthermore, these 'cementing' connections ultimately reach out, through the *building [of] relationships* and tie individuals, groups and the festival into the wider multi-layered entanglement of queer communities, the queer-film industry and the festival circuit.

4.4 - SUMMARY: INSIGHTS FROM 'PRACTICES OF CONNECTING'

It is clear from the above extracts that *connecting* is an omnipresent element of the enactment of the LLGFF. Consideration of these eight practices illuminates the complex and intersecting systems of connection that emerge from and drive the formal and informal relationships that imbue the festival. These relationships ultimately both underpin *[1 Safeguarding]* and are fuelled by the operations of the festival. The above extracts have also shown how the festival has the potential to carve connections across unexpected sub-cultural combinations. Ultimately, these practices facilitate relationship building and provide points of connection for and across a wider web of multiple overlapping queer communities. Furthermore, these practices highlight attempts to honour the fulfilment of industry and community expectations arising from the multiple conceptions of what the LLGFF 'should' provide (see 2.1). It is clear from the above extracts that *connecting* is an integral facet and mechanism of the continued *legitim[ate]* enactment of the LLGFF. Crucially, however, the practices of *connecting* have been shown to work in tandem with the practices of *gatekeeping*, (re-)creating value for and propagating festival communities and, vitally, cementing a highly socialised festival elite to support these processes and provide an anchor of organisational enactment across iterations.

5: NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES: *PERSONAL, ORGANISATIONAL, AND OF THE ACCEPTABLE*

"There's a balance between films that are primarily boys or girls or trans, or wordy documentaries or comedies... there is a richness. I always say it's like baking a cake! In that, cherries are wonderful but you can't have an entire cake made out of cherries! [...] Another thing that I always say is that we are a 'very broad church'. Now, I've said it so often that I get applause when I say it! [...] The bars are rammed full of people, so it's life enhancing for people to see the range of people that do come. The core of the festival has got to be films and films from around the world. Features, Docs and Shorts… that's our core. But we love adding elements of performance and entertainment, like when we did the Dusty Springfield lecture and we had a Dusty Springfield disco. We had loads of Dusty Springfield lookalikes and people were just loving the music!"

(Participant 1)

"Sometimes I do get frustrated with the programme… but I understand that there is a community that needs serving and people love these films, a lot of them. Yeah, but 'Fringe!'s programme, I feel, feels more dynamic and fresher. And more open to an understanding of what 'queer film' is."

(Participant 5)

"They have to get that balance right. There's usually the artistic films that they really want, because those are the ones that give the festival weight. And then there are the fluffy 'boys without shirts' films or 'girls in vests' that... bring the hungry audience in!"

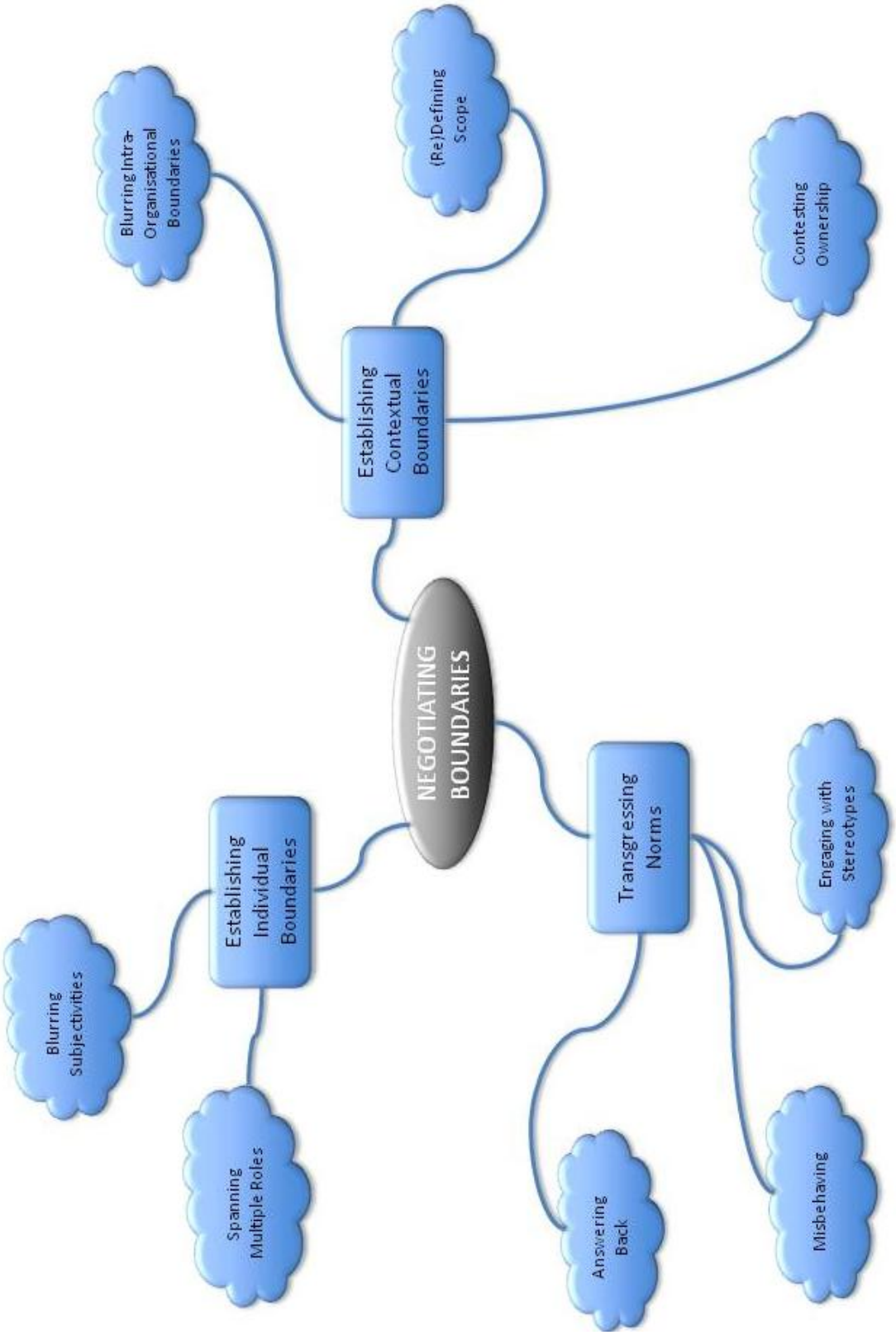
(Participant 11)

"My kind of priorities were always about balancing the mainstream films with the art-house, the experimental. So, it's championing new voices, difficult work, which is what a festival is all about, as well as programming films that are going to make the money."

(Participant 12)

As the epigraphs on preceding page illustrate, issues surrounding the negotiation of the boundaries, scope and reach of the festival, as well as those surrounding community and festival norms, seem to have significance for participants. As such, the fifth and final theme to be examined in this chapter is 'Negotiating Boundaries'. This thematic grouping comprises three component categories, which will be presented in the following three corresponding sub-sections: (5.1) Establishing Individual Boundaries; (5.2) Establishing Contextual Boundaries; and (5.3) Transgressing Norms. These categories, in turn, comprise eight practices, as illuminated in Figure 42 overleaf, which will be discussed in relation to relevant data extracts. Finally, a summary section (5.4) will elaborate upon the theme of 'Negotiating Boundaries'.

Figure 42: Negotiating Boundaries Theme



5.1 - ESTABLISHING INDIVIDUAL BOUNDARIES

This category comprises two practices — *spanning multiple roles* and *blurring subjectivities* — discussed below, which serve to continuously re-formulate the engagement of individuals with the enactment of the festival and, thereby, shape the relationship between them. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these two practices are shown in Figure 43 overleaf.

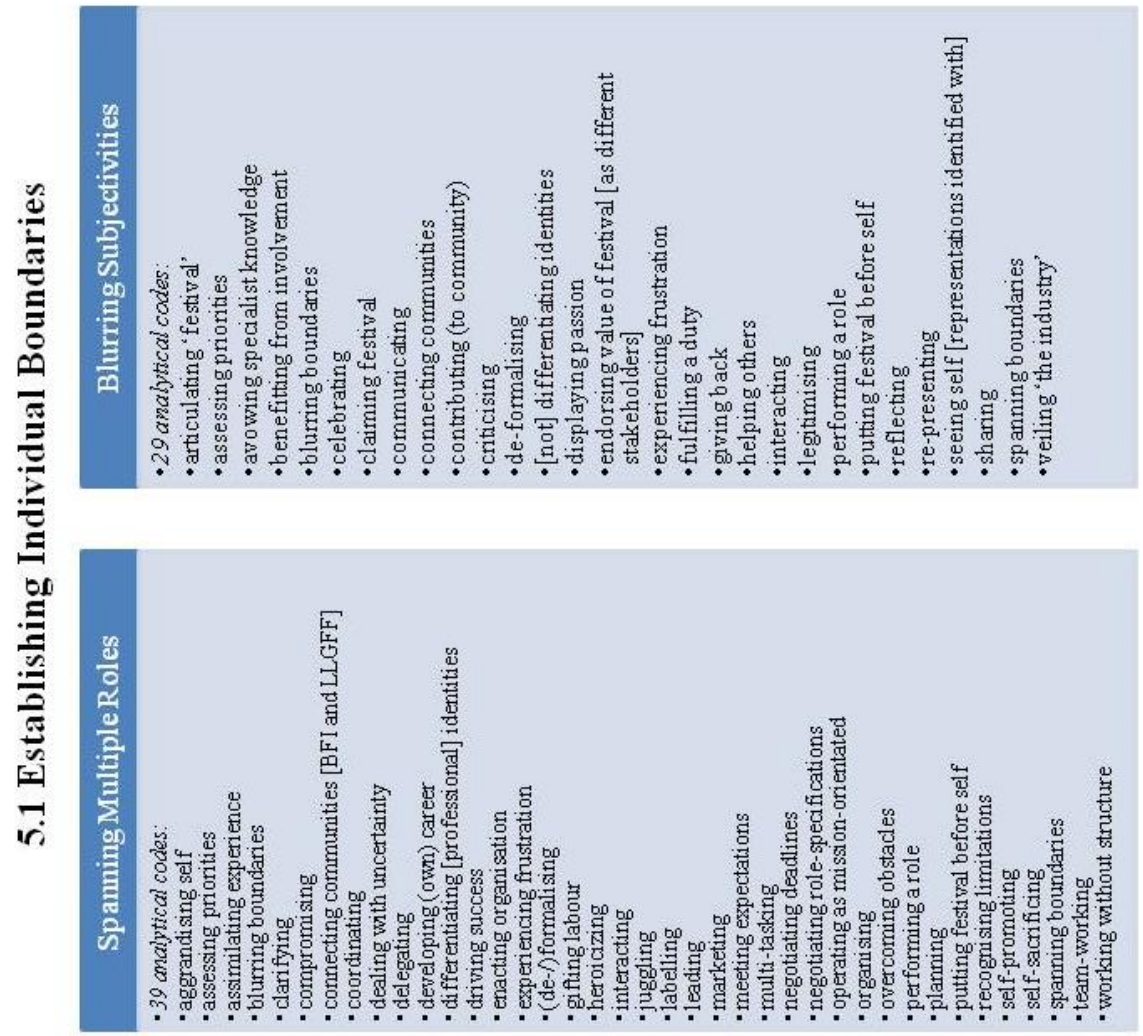
SPANNING MULTIPLE ROLES

The complex interwoven relationship between the LLGFF and BFI is reflected in the staffing of the festival. Notably, three of the five programmers have full-time 'day-jobs' with the BFI outwith their LLGFF contractual commitments. The complex interplay between these responsibilities is evoked in the following extract:

> *It's a slightly* ***unusual arrangement*** *because* ***my full-time position at the BFI*** *is a 'Communications Manager for Archive and Heritage'. I work in the marketing and press department in a public relations role [...]. So* ***I'm kind of embedded in the fabric of the BFI... and separately employed as a consultant to be Senior Programmer*** *for the LLGFF. There was a time when I was given a four-month secondment to work on the festival but that was when there was more money available. Now from October to March* ***I get one day off a week in order to work on the festival****. [...] So I have my* ***permanent day job****, and I've been at the BFI for 25 years, and* ***my consulting job****. [Also]* ***within my role as Communications Manager I have been allocated the LLGFF*** *to do the Press work on.* ***There's a slight bit of tension****...between being a programmer and promoting the festival. [...] I think* ***I've become less directive than when I was Senior Programmer and taking four months off... then I was like 'The Captain'****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

This otherwise eloquent and relaxed interlocutor was perceptibly more hesitant when describing this complicated contractual arrangement *[blurring subjectivities]*. Whilst his effectiveness in his role as a programmer may have benefitted from his privileged

Figure 43: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Establishing Individual Boundaries'



position, 'embedded in the fabric of the BFI', the Press Office will also gain from this Communication Manager's expert insight and understanding of the festival *[blurring intra-organisational boundaries]*. This participant also alludes to a shift in leadership dynamic resulting from an alteration to the temporal boundaries assigned to the Senior Programmer role. Crucially, participants also highlighted that the pre-arranged division of time across each role may not always transpire as expected or hoped and, as will be discussed, conflicts of interest may arise. Markedly, in practice, part-time contracts between autumn and spring are not bounded temporally by these dates or by suggested contracted hours-per-week. As one programmer notes 'in my day job, I've always kind of got it in the back of my mind' (Participant 2), which, in this case, she concedes is mutually productive given that her day job at the BFI provides access to databases and sources that can be used to inform subsequent programming choices.

The *spanning [of] multiple roles* is further complicated during the enactment of the festival. For some contracted staff their day jobs (as, for instance, schoolteachers) place certain temporal restrictions upon their availability during the festival (e.g. to introduce films and carry out Q&A sessions). This does not present an endemic problem however, as the festival has limited screenings and few non-industry/educational events during weekday 'working hours'. Although it may be reasonably expected that *spanning multiple roles* by full-time employees of the BFI may have a greater propensity towards seamlessness, the below extract contrasts how this is not always the case:

> *For example, if a television news programme is coming and they want to interview a programmer, I'll just say "interview me, I'm here". So,* ***I'm the Press Officer saying "take me''*** *[...]. It's no big deal, but… On Saturday,* ***just before I was about to go on-stage [as a programmer]*** *with Bishop Gene Robinson,* ***I was getting calls from BBC Radio 5 Live News wanting to speak to me in my Press Officer role*** *and* ***I had to say "well I'm just about to go on stage, I can't really talk to you now****, I'll get back to you [...]". They seemed a bit put out that I wasn't welcoming them with open arms and that there wasn't someone that they could speak to immediately.*
>
> (Participant 1)

The above extract also highlights how being pulled in two (or more) directions can negatively impact upon the public-relations practices of the BFI *[blurring intra-*

organisational boundaries], which, presumably, would normally involve prompt responses to press enquiries.

The relationship between the enactment of the LLGFF and those individuals constituting the festival-organising and -enacting communities is further complicated by loosely-defined (or loosely-adhered to) specifications for certain roles. For instance, the following extract outlines the variety of typical daily tasks undertaken by volunteers:

> ***You basically never did the same thing twice***. ***I was doing everything*** *from marketing materials; [...] setting up for parties; serving drinks and canapés for premiere and distributor parties in the Blue Room; doing smaller filmmaker receptions in the Green Room for talent that is about to go on; [...] working as part of the screening library, so maintaining the library, getting people set up with the screening process. [...] There was quite a bit of seat filling, which is the fun part(!) where they want to make sure a screening looks nice and full, so if they've got extra seats they let us sit in!*
>
> (Participant 6)

The versatility displayed by volunteers encapsulates a wider dominant ethos of pulling together or 'pitching in' wherever necessary for the collective success of the festival *[experiencing collectively; sacrificing (for greater good)]*. Furthermore, engaging with loosely-defined roles may mean that some paid positions actually comprise 'kind of two jobs in one' (Participant 5) and roles 'might evolve or change' (Participant 10).

Contrary to the aforementioned programmers' statements of their own programming propensity towards *pursuing own interests* (in part fuelled by *recognising stakeholders*), in practice there is a collective agility and willingness to go beyond individual tastes or comfort zones, as evidenced in the following extract: 'nobody just sticks to their... it's interesting this year that I[154] wrote about *Stud Life*[155] and [programmer X] wrote about *Vito*[156]. So, we're not sticking... I could have written about *Gun Hill Road*![157]' (Participant 1). In addition to writing programme copy beyond their obvious 'expertise', this agility is also manifest in the range of specific film

[154] This programmer is an older (white) male who stated in interview that he was principally hired due to his interest in archive cinema.
[155] (Dir: Campbell X; UK, 2011) This film explores queer life in multi-cultural East-London, through a butch black lesbian protagonist.
[156] (Dir: Schwarz; USA 2011) Documentary about gay activist and film historian Vito Russo, author of *The Celluloid Closet* [aimed to reclaim/recognise queer characters/references in historical cinema].
[157] (Dir: Green; USA, 2011) This mainstream feature addresses young trans people of colour.

introductions and Q&A discussions that each programmer leads. This adeptness is enabled through the programmers' deep socialisation to queer filmmaking, familiarity with the standards employed in writing copy and socialised understanding of the overt group-norms and concerns of multiple stakeholder groups.

Evidently, the necessity of an ability to adapt, to *spa[n] multiple roles*, extends beyond the skilled tiers of the festival-elite. It is, in fact, a pre-requisite for the re-engagement of those newcomers whom have managed to break through into the periphery; a necessary quality for inclusion as a repeat volunteer. Despite the LLGFF's grand stature amongst queer festivals, the relative scale and scope of the LLGFF's remit and enactment (in comparison to, for instance, the LFF) is reflected in a more limited volume of financial backing for staffing (granted each year from the BFI).[158] Limited finance and the multitude of essential roles and responsibilities necessitate flexibility and, crucially, working together as a team over and above formally delineated roles. Thus, as the above excerpts have shown, collective enactment of this practice is a critical order-producing element in the success of each festival iteration.

BLURRING SUBJECTIVITIES: *PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SUB-CULTURAL*

The abundance of interconnections between individuals, festival-elites, peripheral festival communities and wider queer communities has been explored throughout this chapter, revealing the multiplicity of each individual's engagement with the festival. Similarly, multiple subjectivities are tied together, in dissonance and harmony, at the level of the individual. The below extract highlights the diversity of the form of just one participant's interactions with the LLGFF and, therefore, the variety of standpoints from which they can pre-reflexively participate in and evaluate the LLGFF:

> *I've been coming to the festival for probably sixteen or seventeen years.* ***I've had films in the festival****, then* ***I've done events for the festival****.* ***Before I***

[158] 'Although festival box-office revenue is healthy, this covers above-line 'operation costs only. Staff, overheads and venue costs are met by BFI net subsidy' (BFI, 2011e: 1).

> ***was employed by the festival**, I used to do **community events** with Transfabulous, my organisation, the arts festival, we'd do a night. **We'd do a party** after one of the films... we had **performers** and things like that. **I've been involved in different capacities for a long time**. [now a programmer]*
>
> (Participant 3)

Each member of the festival-organising community has a nuanced multi-layered connection with the LLGFF and a unique combination of subjectivities emanating from their individual patterning of professional, personal and sub-cultural experiences and memberships. Arguably, for programmers, these multiple subjectivities are engaged in a constant push and pull that, as outlined in sections 2.2 (see 'pursuing own interests') and 4 (*Connecting*), shape the programming choices of both individuals and the collective cohort. For instance, participant four's (personal) embeddedness in activist groups may impact upon (professional) decision-making processes.[159]

A related observation stemming from close analysis of interview material and fieldwork observation is the endemic oscillation of pronoun usage and, particularly, grammatical voice: essentially, slippage between the first-person singular and the first-person plural (i.e. between 'I' and 'we'; 'me' and 'us'). Some relevant examples, a mere fraction of those recorded, have been signalled throughout this chapter and are strongly indicative of the pre-reflexive blurring of subjectivities often at play in any individual. Interestingly, by contrast, the vocal articulation pattern (particularly in the oral stress placed upon the pronouns) in the following excerpt was strongly suggestive of the participant's *deliberate* movement between (personal and professional) subjectivities:

> *It was **painful to be under threat**. **It was painful to have to represent the BFI** still, with the festival, **in a kind of neutral way** and **keep my personal feelings about it** — because **as a member of the queer community I had personal opinions about "you are threatening my festival!"** — out of it because **I work for the festival and I work for the BFI**. There were many changes happening during that period at this organisation, with many departments being restructured, not just the festivals department. It was painful that it could have potentially gone... I think **we all felt the chopping block held over us... the axe hovering above us**.*
>
> (Participant 2)

[159] See footnote 108 for an overview of participant four's multifarious points of connection and engagement with the festival.

Whilst oscillation of grammatical voice may be expected in any individual's discussion of their work, it is reasonable to principally trace the 'I' to the individual, and to understand the collective 'we' to signify an organisation, or relevant unit thereof. However, in the complex case of the LLGFF, the predominant use of the collective 'we' instead pertains to an ubiquitous facet of (personal) identity: (non-normative) sexuality. This collective LGBTQ voice is underpinned by membership bonds to a (albeit disparate) sexuality-based community. Furthermore, it is also pertinent to note that the de-formalisation of professional relationships (discussed in 'maintaining informal networks', 4.3) also impacts the register chosen by a speaker.

The meaning-making and identity-forming *blurring [of] subjectivities* poignantly indicates the emotional '*dis*order-producing' tug-of-war that underlies the negotiation of an individual's place within the already complex web of the LLGFF. It would be remiss at this point not to comment upon the *blurring [of] subjectivities* of the embedded researcher. Certainly, my socialisation to both queer cinema and certain aspects of queer communities shaped my rapport with participants and, coupled with the research project at hand, my pre-reflexive and conscious interactions with the festival as: an audience member, researcher, queer-community member and queer cinephile (in training). Similarly, as audience members we each have manifold and polymorphic relationships to both individual films/events and to the festival itself. Moving beyond subjectivities emanating from our direct professional or community entanglements, this negotiation is further compounded by shared or, in fact, universal senses (of injustice, empathy etc.) that can override our identification with a sub-culture and, ultimately, re-locate subjectivity to the collective realm of 'LGBTQ'. For instance, a filmic narrative exploring a lesbian 'queer underground' (outlawed) within a repressive political regime may elicit and consolidate a shared 'collective LGBTQ sense' of injustice, regardless of individual identifications.

The exploration of the above two practices unveils two key aspects of the negotiation of an individual's relationships with and to the LLGFF. Consideration of these practices uncovers the multiplicity of any individual's engagement with and within the festival and, therefore, the multi-layered and continuously re-formulated

boundaries of their connections. Furthermore, this category also suggests how rich layerings of identity could shape each individual's relationships to those engagements, which also spiral outwards from the festival into community groups or aspects of the queer-film industry. Similarly, moving beyond the festival-organising community, examination of these practices also alludes to the multiple engagements that audience members may have with the festival (e.g. a 'political', 'trans', 'filmmaker' and 'BME' individual).

5.2 - ESTABLISHING CONTEXTUAL BOUNDARIES

This category comprises three practices — *blurring intra-organisational boundaries, (re)defining scope* and *contesting ownership* — discussed below, which serve to (re-)mould the edges, shape and form of the festival and cast light upon the fundamental impact of the opaque sense of who the festival is ultimately accountable to. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 44 overleaf.

BLURRING INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Although the tightly interwoven nature of the LLGFF and the BFI is apparent in publicity material (as shown in Figure 45 on page 279), the precise structure of the organisational relationship between them is not easily discernible. Surprisingly, even some members of the festival-elite struggled to grasp the interconnections; interviewees of this class did not articulate a unified conceptualisation of their relationship. The following extracts indicate the range of impressions by presenting some of the more notable outliers:

> ***LLGFF has to fight for its existence with the mother institution [BFI]*** *so that every year it can say: "We have not been beaten, we are still here and standing!"*
>
> (Participant 10)

> *It's quite difficult for people to understand* ***what... what*** *this festival is. Because it obviously happens at the BFI but* ***it's a.... it's a charity that runs out of the BFI****.*
>
> (Participant 4)

The latter extract also provides evidence of the hesitancy and uncertainty that clouds this issue. Misconceptions and partial misunderstandings potentially further muddy the

Figure 44: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Establishing Contextual Boundaries'

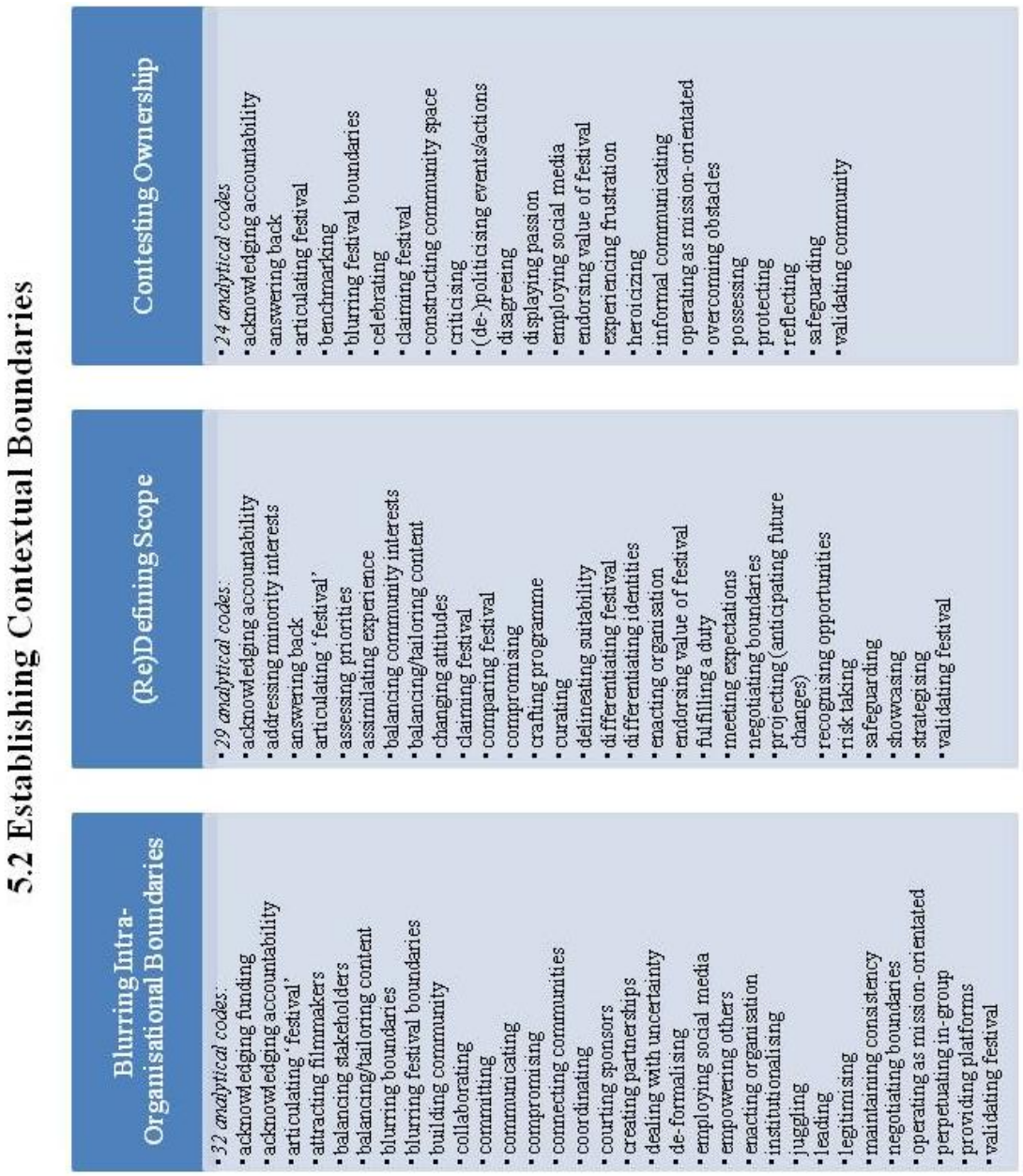
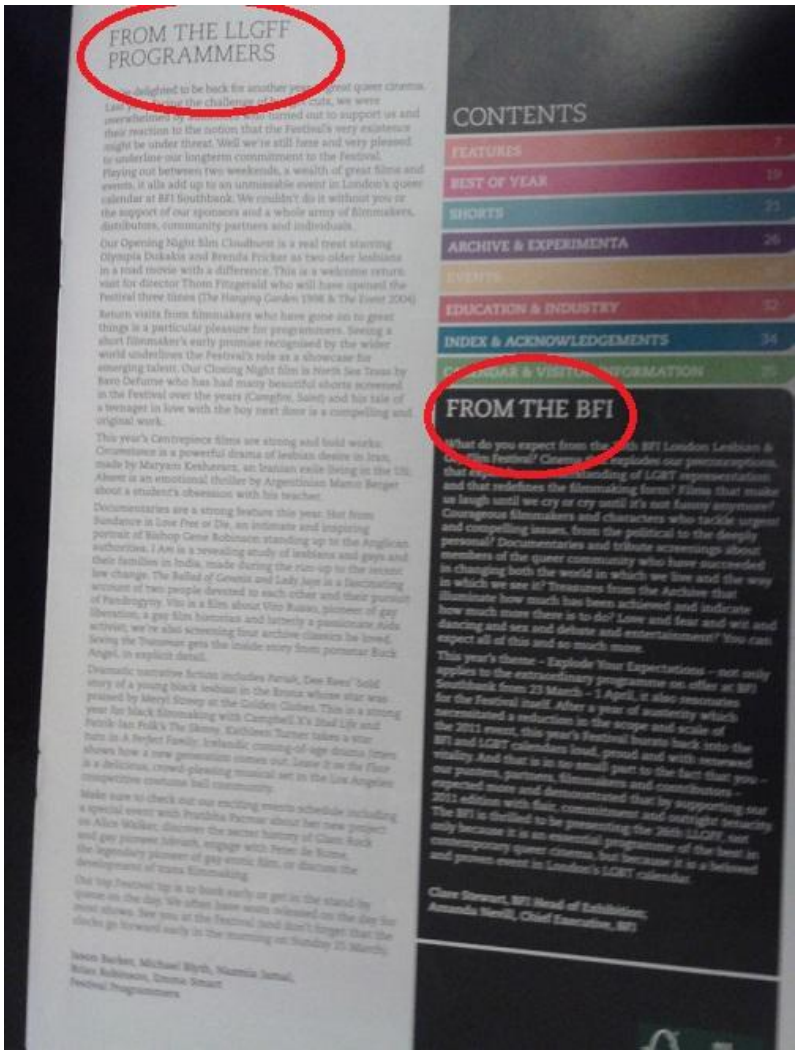


Figure 45: LLGFF print programme extract (BFI, 2012c: 5)



waters. Crucially, however, the BFI funds the festival's operating costs[160] and is committed to the continued enactment of the festival, evidenced in the below extract featuring the BFI Chief Executive:

> *The BFI is thrilled to be presenting the 26th LLGFF, not only because it is an essential programme of the best in contemporary queer cinema, but because it is a beloved and proven event in London's LGBT calendar.*
>
> *Clare Stewart, BFI Head of Exhibition;*
> *Amanda Nevill, Chief Executive, BFI.*
>
> (BFI, 2012c: 5 [extract also visible in the above Figure 45])

[160] LLGFF box-office revenue 'covers the above line operation costs only. Staff, overheads and venue costs are met by BFI net subsidy' (BFI, 2011e: 1).

The *spanning [of] multiple roles* discussed in 5.1 also contributes to the *blurring [of] intra-organisational boundaries* between the LLGFF and the BFI. As previously indicated, several members of the festival-elite are also full-time BFI staff members (i.e. three of the five programmers). However, an aspect not yet considered is the crossover of several BFI departments and staff who work before and during the festival to ensure its success (from the public-facing box-office and hospitality teams to the specialist projectionists and Press/Marketing functions). Unlike the festival-elite and volunteers, these individuals are (generally) not specifically socialised to the concerns and cultures of the LGBTQ populace. Despite the extra demands placed upon these staff during this busy time, the following extract indicates their willingness to embrace the festival:

> *Having been to **the LFF, it feels like a really different beast, it feels really stressful**... There's lots of **high-maintenance** people around, lots of distributors and lots of **'serious business'** going on... That stuff happens at this festival on a much smaller scale but there's **something much more relaxed. There is a feeling of carnival around this one that everyone feels like it's a party**. People don't seem to mind working at it. Which is really nice given that most of the staff here [BFI] are obviously not gay.*
>
> (Participant 4)

The above extract also hints that during the enactment of the LFF and the LLGFF, intra-organisational boundaries with the BFI are differentially blurred. This blurring, coupled with the conspicuous predominance of LLGFF-contracted festival-elite members with a 'BFI day-job', further promotes crossover between enterprises. Thus, prevailing 'anchoring' artefacts that underlie BFI-enacted practices (i.e. terminology, branding, ethos, language, aims and objectives) may permeate the intra-organisational boundaries and potentially enable and delimit activities at the LLGFF, to a greater extent than without such crossover.

The harmonious fusion of the LLGFF and BFI can be aptly symbolised in the following example regarding the work of filmmaker Peter de Rome [referred to below as PDR]. Firstly, the below extract demonstrates a *blurring [of] subjectivities* of a BFI/LLGFF staff member and illuminates a productive linkage between the personal and professional:

> *The magazine 'Films and Filming' was in my local library [...], in the early 70s it was virtually like a gay magazine. [...] They included a piece about the short erotic films of PDR. I* ***saw that in 'Films and Filming' in 1974, read his autobiography*** *in maybe 1984 [...].* ***A friend,*** *who was a 'Gay Times' journalist, wrote a feature about gay-male film erotica and mentioned PDR. PDR rang him up and said "I have my original Super-8s in Manhattan. Do you think anyone in Britain would be interested in having them?" He [journalist] phoned me****! I knew a lot about PDR already, and got them acquired by the BFI National Archive... which I think was the first time that explicit erotic gay films had been taken into the National Collection****. [...]* ***Those films are now being released on DVD on the BFI label****... and so it is a very satisfying trajectory that* ***someone whose work is virtually unknown but who was a real film pioneer*** *at a time when almost no gay films were being made [...] But it tells us something about how* ***information and research can lead you to making a cultural impact****.*
>
> (Participant 1)

The festival's treatment of this DVD release further unveils the fruitful fluidity and permeability of the borders between the BFI and LLGFF. This BFI DVD was launched during the festival at a special event: a screening of fragments of PDR's work, followed by a public celebratory after-party with the filmmaker himself *[archiving; revising/revisiting historical narratives]*.

Further examples of *intra-organisational blurring* include: cross-marketing of the LLGFF and 'Out at the Pictures'[161], both online and in-print; the necessity to purchase BFI membership in order to secure tickets to many screenings (many 'sell out' before tickets are released to the public); the dedication of three pages of the thirty-eight page LLGFF print-programme to BFI advertising[162]; the previously discussed dispatch of the LLGFF programme to all BFI members; and shared use of social-media accounts. Overall, the collective enactment of this practice contributes to the consolidation and anchoring of the festival's identity as one tightly intertwined with the BFI, which, in turn, has a *legitimising* function in *positioning [the] festival* as both high-brow and professional.

[161] The BFI's monthly programming strand dedicated to queer cinema, programmed by participant two.
[162] Eleven pages were dedicated to advertising in total. The other eight pages contained advertisements for: Accenture (sponsor); *Women of the World* Festival (Southbank Centre); LGBTQ film/DVD distributors (Peccadillo Pictures, Matchbox films, Fusion Media, Network Releasing and TLA); English National Ballet; online LGBTQ matchmaking services (DIVAdate.co.uk and gaydar.co.uk); Popstarz (queer nightclub); Sadler's Wells; and Bloom & Cadogan (introductions agency for LGB professionals).

(RE)DEFINING SCOPE:
WHAT IS THE FESTIVAL? AND, WHAT 'SHOULD' IT BE?

As has been alluded to throughout this chapter, through its wide scope and plurality of telos the LLGFF invokes multiple criterions of success, perceived according to a particular balance of coexisting conceptualisations — primarily high-brow, community-based and professional — at play for both individuals and communities *[2.1 Positioning Festival; 2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival; 4.2 Community Networking]*. However, beyond (and yet also intertwined) with such conceptualisations, impressions of the character and, therefore, the scope of the LLGFF can be further assessed according to additional criteria. The researcher wishes to present three such criteria that define the (structural) scope of the festival, considered below and framed as three 'planes' along which such impressions can be located: (i) film 'screenings' or film 'festival'; (ii) breadth of festival remit (i.e. film festival or arts festival); and (iii) arts festival or cultural festival. For purposes of clarity, Figure 46, below, illustrates these planes as well as the locations of an (example) impression of the LLGFF. Notably the sliding red 'impression' indicators would be a reflection of individual understandings and engagements with a particular festival and, in this case, could also shift according to whether the LLGFF was being (passively) compared to a grassroots community festival or the LFF.

Figure 46: (Re)Defining Scope - characterising the festival

Plane (i) involves the extent of investment in the public-facing aspects of a 'professionally-run film festival' (i.e. panel discussions), as opposed to mere film screenings, as the extract below illuminates:

> *If you can have someone there to **introduce the film or have a Q&A or round-table discussion**... **That's what makes a film festival a film festival**. Because, you can go to the cinema any time but people come to the film festival **to see... the directors, cast, DOPs** [Directors of Production]. I think that's essential. **It's what people expect**. And people pay for that too. Because festival tickets are quite expensive. **They want to see the talent there, or a discussion.***
>
> (Participant 12)

Thus, this plane can be seen to represent the perceived difference between a series of film screenings and the essential essence of a 'film festival': engagement with industry and *connecting* the industry with festival audiences. The second plane reflects the breadth of festival remit in moving beyond a film-centred festival to a more mixed-media arts festival, as the below extract illustrates:

> *I did a mixed programme that was all comedies [...]. **I had funny short films and I had stand-up comediennes between them. It was like a [queer] comedy night.** That worked really well. People liked that a lot because it was something different.*
>
> (Participant 3)

Evidently, this plane can also be understood to signify the potential movement between a LGBTQ-film festival and a LGBTQ-arts festival, albeit with a principal emphasis on film.[163]

Finally, the third plane relates to potential movement even further: beyond an arts festival to a differentiated mega-festival comprising (mainly) film but also arts, community and social events to constitute an all-encompassing celebratory and (queer-)cultural festival around which communities may congregate. In this sense, it is relevant to consider the following extract:

> *I think what **we're also very proud of is that it's not solely about the films:** that we **bring community groups in**, that we have an **element of performance***

[163] For comparison, the month long Glasgow-based *Glasgay!* queer-arts festival includes theatre, comedy, visual-arts, music, and film represents just another facet of this festival. See <http://glasgay.co.uk/>.

> *to make the space work, that there are some **after-parties** and **different sorts of events and panel discussions** so, **there is a richness**. And, **the building is like a kind of queer cultural centre**... we have DJs in on the weekends [...]. It's not just film on screen, buy a ticket and leave [...]. It is a real "festival", not just a discrete series of films.*
>
> (Participant 1)

This third plane can be seen to symbolise a (re)territorialisation of the festival's physical location into a queer-community cultural happening/space *[contesting ownership; constructing community space]*. Thus, impressions (and, crucially, expectations) of the character of the festival can be located along each of these three planes, which simultaneously are entangled amongst the three conceptualisations (A, B and C) discussed in 2.1.[164]

Ultimately, these impressions feed into our expectations of the LLGFF and shape our lived experience by either living up to them, disappointing them or, even, 'exploding them' as the 2012 festival slogan invites. Similarly, these impressions collectively anchor the LLGFF, shaping the actual scope of the festival by feeding into differential measures of 'success' employed by the festival-elite and also the BFI. Practically, the outcome of this practice activity is reflected anew in the annual conceived scope of the LLGFF. Significantly, this affects the: provision of and boundaries of 'appropriate' events *[events organising]*; extent, manner and directions of *reaching out* (e.g. to younger members of communities); extent of involvement with professional and community groups/organisations; provision of free events (for both filmmaking and LGBTQ communities); importance placed upon various aspects of the festival (such as Q&As or the archive strand); and, critically, the films selected *[2.2 Justifying Decision-Making]*.

The location of impressions along each plane (and others not discussed here) defines the contextual boundaries of the festival. These boundaries are not a fixed or unified point but are historically contingent and can shift or even dramatically alter

[164] For purposes of clarification, *Glasgay!* can be examined with regards to these three planes: (i) its filmic arm is more a facet of the festival rather than an integrated film festival (i.e. film screenings but, perhaps, lacking industry provision or connection activities such as Q&As); (ii) as an arts festival it has a varied calendar of events; and (iii) whilst a celebration of queer culture, it is a predominately high-brow arts festival scattered across multiple venues for an entire month rather than an intense cultural celebration with lots of community members congregating together in one space.

through time. This is reflected in the 2011 non-inclusion of the Delegate Centre and also in the following extract by a programmer (speaking from the grammatical perspective of 'we' on behalf of the festival-organising community): '**we <u>now</u> acknowledge** that a lot of people don't come and see the films. A lot of people come to be around the film environment' (Participant 3). The meaning-making enactment of *(re)defining scope* can arguably be understood as a tributary underlying element to many other practices, through its shaping of the objectives, measures of success, targets etc. that become 'artefacts' within the wider network of festival practices. Finally, it is pertinent to consider this phenomenon from the perspective of an industry stakeholder, for whom the 'scope' of the festival, and thus his professional relationship with it as a distributor, has evolved alongside the wider industry in which it is enacted:

> ***Generally, these days there is very little new material for us to see in the festival**. A lot of it will have either **been submitted to us as screeners** or **we'll have seen it at other festivals**... Obviously every year there is a degree of new material that we haven't seen... and we try and see some of it but it's very difficult for us these days because, **if we have a number of films in the festival we tend to be looking after the talent** that's attending. So the team doesn't get that much time to go to screenings and stuff... **<u>not like it used to be in the old days</u>**!*
>
> (Participant 11)

CONTESTING OWNERSHIP:
CONFLICTING EXPECTATIONS; WHO IS THE FESTIVAL ULTIMATELY ACCOUNTABLE TO?

Many of the extracts included throughout this chapter shed light upon the relationship between the festival and key stakeholder groups. A unique aspect of the LLGFF is its dual position as both a community-centred festival (unlike many mainstream festivals) and *the* public-facing institutionally-approved epitome of a professional-quality queer-film festival (unlike volunteer/community led, funded and organised counterparts). Thus, the enactment of the LLGFF must constantly negotiate a complex field of, at times, conflicting expectations that arise from the multiplicity of

groups with vested claims of 'festival ownership'. These claims and related expectations may clash and necessitate the continual negotiation of myriad festival boundaries in order to best satisfy (or, at times, move away from) each group's ever-shifting desires.

The festival-organising community recognise multiple claims of ownership and the differential meanings of success that each stakeholder group may hold. For instance, the hosting of free community events and attempts to *construc[t] community space* are manifestations of attempts to honour these claims. As a consequence of the multiplicity of stakeholders, the festival programme provides perhaps the most apparent and telling actualisation of attempts to recognise and satiate manifold claims of partial ownership pertaining to diverse camps *[maintaining multiplicity; 2.2 Justifying Decision-Making; representing communities]*. In order to manage expectations, the complex push and pull between discordant concerns is negotiated through compromise and attempts to 'balance' the programme content. A wide range of these concerns have already been considered in this chapter, particularly those relating to aesthetics, representation, commercial viability, showcasing new talent, politics, diversity, sub-cultures, festival scope, engaging with the past, *recognising limitations*, *reaching out*, etc. Ultimately, as has been shown, individual positionalities and patterns of interaction with the festival shape the contextual boundaries of what is expected from the festival at a personal level.

The following extract — articulated by a programmer, LGBTQ-community member and permanent BFI staff member — displays characteristic slippages of grammatical voice and demonstrative pronouns but also, crucially, an overriding deference of ownership towards 'them', signifying LGBTQ communities:

> ***We become the community*** *for the week,* ***we represent the community****. We want to be involved with* ***them*** *and* ***for them to feel, to see it as their festival****. Because* ***they*** *are the ones that buy the tickets,* ***they*** *are the ones that make us programme each year. Without* ***them*** *we wouldn't be doing it really. If* ***they*** *didn't come to see us we wouldn't be here.*
>
> (Participant 2)

This excerpt also demonstrates how, perhaps much more than the LFF, the LLGFF's relationship with its paying audience is imbued with responsibility, accountability,

ownership and duty. Similarly, as already discussed, numerous participants described attempts to actively fulfil the festival's duty towards the queer-filmmaking community through dedicated networking and training events and efforts to showcase and facilitate young filmmakers *[1.3 Perpetuating Through Education; 4.1 Professional Networking]*. Contrary to the potential clashing of expectations outlined above, the below extract provides an interesting example of a harmonious instance whereby multiple stakeholders' claims upon the festival are simultaneously recompensed:

> *Yesterday in a screening a really fantastic **debate** started happening halfway through the Q&A about the Church and gays and marriage and everything. It was brilliant! The filmmakers contributed and... I just was so **satisfied** and it's so **rewarding** when you see the filmmakers face! And you think **"well, that's what they're all here for"** [...]. I think that's the most **rewarding**.*
>
> (Participant 2)

This impromptu discussion, involving individuals from myriad walks of life, had the feel of a comfortable exchange between peers all very much at home in the BFI (Field-diary). This is indicative of the possibility of ownership being projected onto shared physical space and the potential circumventing of the separation of spaces previously discussed, albeit at the level of an individual film and not festival-wide *[connecting communities]*.

Changes, however, to a known and accepted 'formula' may elicit strong feelings of disrupted ownership. The below example conveys a reaction to the 2011 cuts and illustrates how community members may even contest 'ownership' of the festival with the parent organisation which funds it, the BFI:

> *My most significant memory is last year when the cuts were announced. There was a really **funereal**... a real sense of **mourning**. And negative emotions which ranged from **anger** and **resentment** to the fact that **our special festival**, along with everything else was being cut and the future was uncertain. Everyone was really **outraged**! Right through to just feeling really **sad** and **dejected**.*
>
> (Participant 9)

This extreme example conveys a sense of a possession being wrenched from its rightful owner and this sentiment echoes in other instances that followed the cuts, such as the

'Save the LLGFF' online petition[165] or the public 'Town Hall Session on the future of the LLGFF'[166]. Nevertheless, an unfulfilled expectation may also precipitate community members assuming a degree of agency in creating their own event in the face of an 'official programme'. This is not necessarily a hostile act, as the previously discussed example of the unofficial 'Family Day' illustrates *[constructing (own) community space]*. The aforementioned reactionary launch of the 'Fringe!' festival further provides an emblematic and acute example.

The collectively complex nature of festival stakeholders' political engagement and hence their multi-layered *(de-/re-)politicis[ed]* expectations of the LLGFF is a particularly illuminating dimension of claiming and/or *contesting ownership*. The questions of 'how political is the festival?' and 'how political should the festival be?' elicit innumerable differing responses. Whilst historically attendance at a gay-film festival was construed as a political act by most — as noted, for instance, by participant one — arguably, many would no longer interpret this in the same manner. However, the continued organisation of such a festival by a mainstream institution was, for the most part, still considered relatively radical by most participants *[politicising]*. Nevertheless, as the following extract demonstrates, many also considered that whilst the perceived institutionalisation of the festival may bring many benefits it may also hamper its agility in and ability to fully engage with queer politics:

> *I think **the Lesbian and Gay [LLGFF] is seen as** a sort of like your **comfortable aunt or uncle**. You go there and you can see a lot of mainstream cinema, a lot of classic cinema, which is its speciality when you consider it's got the BFI archive. I think it's **kind of a safe festival**. And people are really happy that it's there. [...] **I'm not sure how dynamic it is right now**. And I think something like 'Fringe!'*[167] *is much more dynamic, much more [...] **alternative**, **grass-roots community** cinema.*
>
> (Participant 12)

The extent to which individual films engage with queer political concerns is considered elsewhere *[politicising]*. As previously indicated, some filmmakers are reluctant to potentially limit the perceived prospective reach of their film through

[165] See footnote 45.
[166] See BFI (2011e).
[167] See footnote 112.

marketing that positions it as a LGBTQ-interest or 'gay' film *[2.1 Positioning Festival]*. As the below extract highlights, criticisms regarding the de-politicising of individual films illuminate an additional layer of *contesting ownership*: a perceived right to the possession of LGBT-interest films by LGBTQ communities.

> *It's not filmmakers, its distributors.* ***Cinema is a business*** *and distributors, most of them* ***don't have a particular agenda about... enhancing the lives of the LGBT community****. They* ***want to make money****! If a distributor thinks that putting a film in a lesbian and gay film festival will prevent them from making money and harm the bottom line then they won't give us the film. Often we are told "We're not* ***positioning*** *this film as a 'gay film', we think it's relevant to everyone". So they put it out with a general marketing campaign,* ***ignoring the gay community who could be their best allies****, and it goes in and out of the West End in a week or two and is never heard of again!*
>
> (Participant 1)

Nevertheless, films that aim to do precisely the opposite are also being made. *Stud Life*[168] is an excellent example of a film made *for* the community *by* the community, (crowd)*funded* by the community and purposively showcased *in* the community. This film is unapologetically saturated throughout with both evident and subtle cultural inferences that are only interpretable in their entirety to those socialised to specific sub-cultures, which, at times, may elicit a feeling of alienation or may be perceived as a learning opportunity *[connecting communities]*. For instance, as someone with limited engagement with BME East-London working-class queer subcultures the researcher, although able to follow and deduce most cultural references, was not versed in the lexical idiosyncrasies of these sub-cultures (but did enjoy learning about them).

As has been argued throughout this chapter, the LLGFF is accountable to a large and diverse pool of stakeholders with whom the festival has a variety of relationships, each of which has different commonly understood criteria of success. Multiple examples of the perception of a need to concurrently meet the expectations of (principally) both film and LGBTQ communities have been highlighted throughout this chapter. Similarly, individual interpretations of the precise balance of these accountabilities have been shown to be shaped by: community memberships; interactions; interests; points of connection across the festival and beyond; and,

[168] (Dir: Campbell X; UK, 2011).

crucially, by their idiosyncratic pattern of socialisations (at differing depths) to a multitude of intersecting practices. The overriding guiding principles and strategies that stem from ownership and accountability thus coexist in a complex chorus and, at times, cacophony of claims of perceived ownership and duty. These collectively converge in the meaning-making, identity-forming and order-producing re-establishment of the contextual boundaries of the festival and thus present a need to constantly negotiate the ever-evolving boundaries.

The three practices explored above provide a structure through which to consider how the malleable edges, scope and form of the festival are both anchored and continuously re-formulated across each festival iteration. Thus, the complex order-producing, meaning-making and identity-forming interplay of these practices contributes to establishing the contextual boundaries within which the festival is housed in a single iteration. That is not to say that these boundaries could be easily reshaped in a short space of time. Rather, that the performative idiosyncratic enactment of these practices may (collectively) shift through time in response to individual or emergent socio-political concerns.

5.3 - TRANSGRESSING NORMS

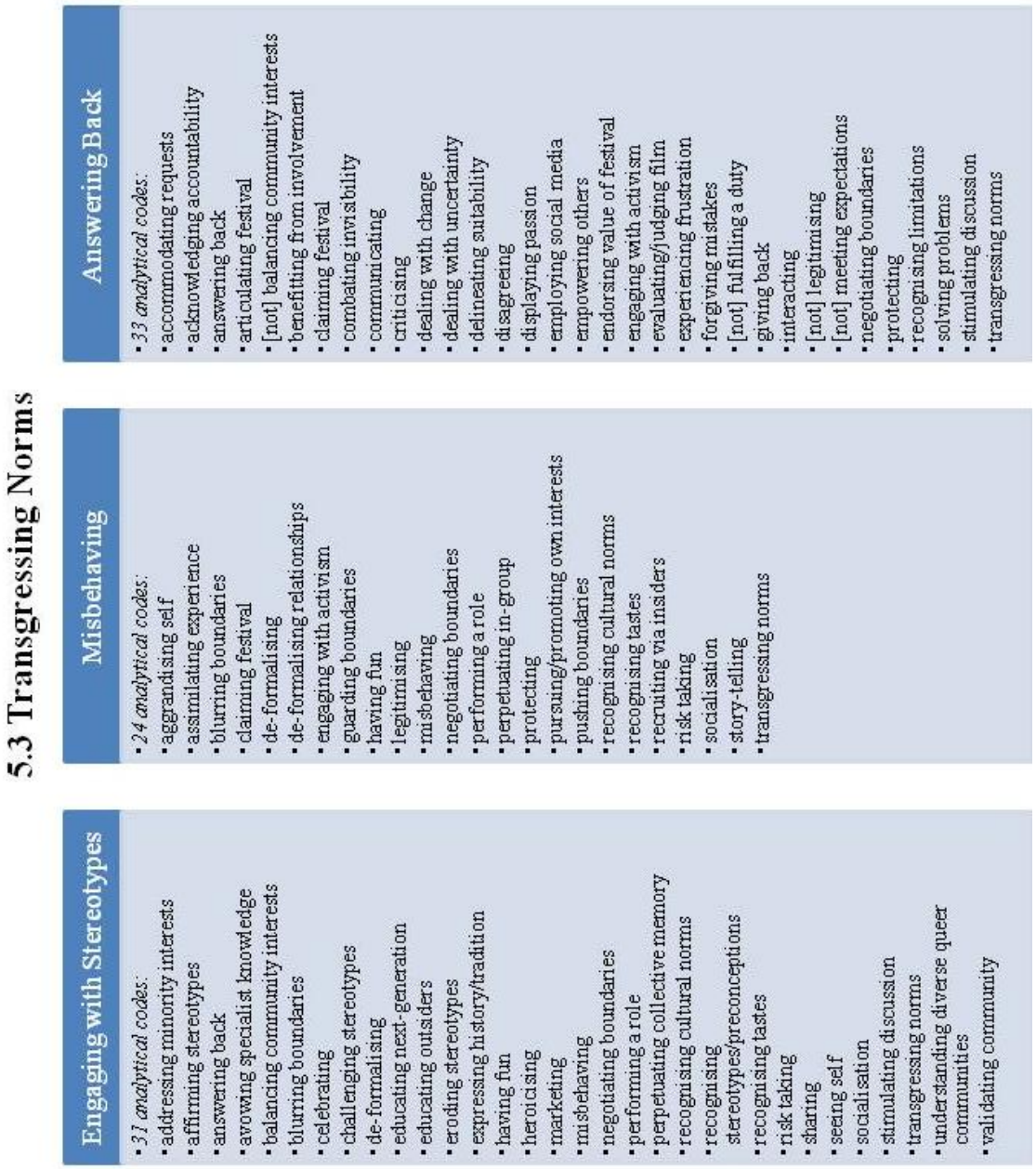
This category comprises three practices — *engaging with stereotypes*, *misbehaving* and *answering back* — discussed below, which together purposively and playfully tease at and provoke understandings and assumptions of the acceptable and appropriate, at societal, institutional, organisational, industry and community levels. The analytical codes associated with the tracing of these three practices are shown in Figure 47 overleaf.

ENGAGING WITH STEREOTYPES

As previously discussed, the festival has an important role in *connecting communities*. Thus, the enactment of the festival presents opportunities for *educating outsiders (and us)* regarding (other) LGBTQ sub-cultures. The festival can, therefore, be considered as a fecund site for breaking-down barriers and eroding (misinformed) stereotypes. Contrary to an expected audience of queer cinephiles and LGBTQ individuals with an interest in film or culture, the LLGFF actually attracts an audience of which around 10% identify as heterosexual (multiple participants). However, their willing attendance is unlikely to signify an opportunity to 'change minds' but, rather, is more likely to be indicative of an already established connection with LGBTQ individuals/communities and/or a deep-seated interest in film. Indeed, as participant five noted, 'a lot of the BFI regulars just disappear for two weeks'. Arguably, however, it is the visibility of the continuing existence of the LLGFF and its deeply evident (BFI-endorsed) *legitim[acy]* that will reach those unconnected to LGBTQ communities and perhaps even prompt them to reconsider their understandings around 'the gay community'.

Additionally, many of those socialised to a particular aspect of LGBTQ cultures may hold just as many misconceived preconceptions about other queer sub-cultures as someone completely outside of these circles. Thus, perhaps of greater interest is the festivals' potential to foster *connecti[ons]* and erode the divisions between LGBTQ

Figure 47: Codes associated in tracing practices of 'Transgressing Norms'



sub-cultures, as the below extract elucidates:

> *[Historically,] it was the lesbian and gay festival, programmed by those two people. Now, I think it's really* ***mixed****. [...] Every year I'm surprised by how mixed an audience is. That* ***what we thought*** *was a gay-men film or what we thought was a trans film, that's not what the audience reflects at all. [...]* ***You have an idea that the people that will be interested in the film are the people whose story it's telling****. It's not the case. I* ***learn*** *every year that this isn't the case because people can go to anything. They can choose anything of interest. [...] I think that's probably the biggest* ***shift*** *that I've seen [...] but that's been a* ***gradual shift*** *over fifteen years, that* ***you've got a lot less segregation****.*
>
> (Participant 3)

Cross-LGBTQ attendance at many events/films was noted in the research field-diary. However, audiences at trans- or lesbian-interest events/films were notably mixed to a lesser extent. Over and above the abundant stereotypes relating to both 'the gay community' and elements of LGBTQ sub-cultures, there are, of course, lots of preconceptions about the festival itself, particularly with regards to its *[c]ontextual boundaries*. For instance, as already discussed, the 2012 festival featured a documentary examining intersex experiences, despite intersex not falling within its 'LGBTQ' remit. Through an intersex organisation, members of this community were invited into the festival and the film also proved popular with LGBTQ audience members *[(re)defining scope]*. Similarly, the inclusion of pornography and events themed around cruising may seem incongruous with some individuals' conception of what is acceptable and expected at a high-brow institution such as the BFI *[2.1 Positioning Festival; 5.2 Establishing Contextual Boundaries]*.

Whilst stereotypes may be an externally-enforced 'false' preconception based primarily upon misinformation or prejudice, many elements of queer culture gleefully embrace or play upon some of the stereotypes surrounding minority sexualities. Stereotypes, in this sense, are not necessarily invalid or false but may relate to a cultural element of a sub-community that has become extrapolated or exaggerated out of context and is now re-engaged with, by some, in an empowering manner *[answering back]*. Inevitably, the LLGFF must negotiate a multitude of stereotypes surrounding 'gay culture' and sub-cultures. The language (and imagery) of the print festival programme abounds with camp imagination and is littered with evocative phrases such as: 'satin-

clad excess', 'those fetching men's trousers that suit [Greta] Garbo so well', 'visual pleasures abound', 'handsome rugged men running around in short tunics wielding big swords', 'but for that divinely cut tuxedo', 'queer peepshow of delights', 'delicious crowd-pleasing musical set in the LA costume ball community', 'moments of peril for the elderly dykes-on-the-run' and 'propagating the erroneous myth that all gays are evil' (BFI, 2012c: 8-32). Similarly, during interviews some programmers even jokingly refer to their own programming choices as stereotypical: 'I think if you look at my programme you can see, there is a theme... pretty lesbians in white vests is a theme that runs through [laughs]' (Participant 2).

Similarly, the events and films selected often embrace LGBTQ stereotypes and even celebrate them. The success of the *Sing-along Sound of Music* event has already been discussed but numerous similar events occur each year, for instance the *We Love Dusty [Springfield]* retrospective and *Dusty Disco* of 2010. The archive strand is often arranged around (or utilised to highlight) anniversaries relevant to a gay icon *[remembering]*. Indeed, programmers will even proudly take liberties in this regard in order to celebrate our icons: 'there was no particular anniversary for that but I don't need an excuse to show Judy Garland films! [laughs]' (Participant 2). The weekend after-parties are also demonstrative of the festival's playful engagement with stereotypes, for instance in securing a drag-queen DJ to host one of the club nights (see Figure 48).[169] Such engagements may also have a more artistic dimension to their

Figure 48: 'LLGFF Opening Party' photograph

[169] This image was posted online by the LLGFF Facebook account. This image is publically available and can be viewed via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151653506020561&set=a.10151653505690561.1073741830.64201455560&type=3&theater>.

exploration of such stereotypes. This was the case in the interactive/participatory *Cruising for Art* performance piece, which participants often described with an alluded to element of *misbehavi[our]* or fun as the following extract shows:

> *They were allowed to talk to anybody who had a bandana, and interact. So sort of cruising... in fact, it was called 'Cruising for Art'*[170]*. So, it's like this cruising thing but* ***at the BFI****!* ***Normal regular gay cruising at the BFI****! [laughs] Which is cultural cruising, so to say!*
>
> (Participant 7)

The enactment of this practice is not limited to the festival-organising community or a wider festival-elite. In fact, large numbers of festival attendees engaged with our stereotypes during the festival through their purposive selection of apparel/accessories/hair-styles that have a coded significance within the LGBTQ communities. This engagement is endemic to socialised members of LGBTQ communities and is (differentially) performed across geographic sites and sub-cultures all year round. Compared with a typical week at the BFI, there was a notable volume of androgynous 'gender-play' in clothing choices and frequent references to queerly-coded aspects of physical appearance. It could be inferred that, given the 'safe space' constructed during the festival and its imbuement with queer and celebratory meaning *[constructing community space]*, some attendees were perhaps more daring or bold in their dress or more tempted, to quote several participants, to 'gay it up'.

The festival's engagement with stereotypes is evidently inescapable but, as has been argued, this is far from a negative attribute. In fact, the festival has great educative potential in breaking-down barriers between LGBTQ sub-cultures and in promoting greater mutual understanding beyond misconceived caricatures and superficial summations *[educating outsiders (and us)]*. Nevertheless, crucial facets of successfully *engaging with [our] stereotypes* can be considered to be: socialisation to queer cultural norms; cultural celebration; sensitivity to when playfulness is appropriate; and, arguably, acceptance as an insider *[3. Gatekeeping]*.

[170] Curated by performance artist Dr Brian Lobel and Aaron Wright, the highly successful 'living-installation-on-tour' *Cruising for Art* visited the LLGFF for one evening (BFI, 2012f). Lobel's performance work is particularly concerned with diseased, politicised and marginalised bodies. *Cruising for Art* 'explores the practice of cottaging and similar encounters in public spaces' (Lobel).

MISBEHAVING:
FUN, THE RISQUÉ AND THE 'NAUGHTY' WITHIN THE FESTIVAL ELITE

A spirit of mischievous naughtiness prevails throughout many dimensions of the LLGFF. Despite the BFI's manifest support of the festival and overall approval of the programme, numerous participants alluded to a slightly rebellious sense of 'getting away with' the slightly risqué to the outright daring, in the face of the parent 'institution'. Whispers, raised eyebrows and tones of incredulousness accompanied descriptions of the 'outlandish' events/films that had been included in the festival over the years, such as the earlier cited example of feminist pornography being shown 'At the **BFI**. In the **daytime**. On **Mother's Day**!' (Participant 4). In a similar vein, a degree of mutual teasing of other LGBTQ groups by members of the festival-enacting community and the general audience was apparent throughout the festival, particularly between the more dominant groups of lesbians and gay men.

The festival atmosphere of 'carnival' (Participant 4) was also reflected in an abundance of jokes and the teasing and blurring of professional boundaries. This impish spirit is encapsulated in the following extract:

> *X always thinks it's very amusing [...] when he's introducing me to people, to sponsors, or when we are at events [...] he always kind of **jokes** "this is **our 'lesbian' programmer**!". Like that's my title, "Lesbian Programmer"! So I did actually have a T-shirt made one year and wore it around the building. If I'm going to get called it I might as well embrace it! [laughs]*
>
> (Participant 2)

As the above extract also illuminates, a sense of workplace fun and friendship was conveyed to (and displayed in front of) the researcher throughout all interviews with members of the festival-organising community. Notably, this sense of mutual teasing and jokes extends beyond the bounds of LLGFF staff to include those BFI employees seconded to work with festival-organising teams. Over and above teasing amongst colleagues, the following extract conveys a celebration of the differential 'naughtiness' unique to the LLGFF:

> *One of the **'Front of House' managers** [Y ...], his office was used by a performance artist for [...] 'Cruising for Art'*[171]*. [...] Y is the **straightest-laced person**, like no-one can go in his office. He was horrified to learn that this performance artist was completely **naked** and using a webcam hooked-up to a laptop... there was another part of the building where audiences were watching her and requesting her to do various things, with various implements! [laughs] ... The intern said to me "I really didn't see what was happening. But I just heard her shout really loud 'Sure I brought toys!'" [laughs] And the artist kept coming out to grab some water completely naked. **Hearing about how horrified Y was about what his office had been used for**... that was a good moment!*
>
> (Participant 5)

This light-hearted humour is not confined to the realms of the festival elite but is shared with audience members during several events and screenings. For instance, the below extract illuminates how a socialised community member can play with/upon stereotypes to playfully tease at professional boundaries and involve audiences through a shared joke: 'I was very honest and got up in front of everybody in NFT1 and said "I programmed this because it's got pretty women in tight vests"' (Participant 2). Tongue-in-cheek flirting also features in audience-facing film introductions and Q&A sessions, indicative of the festival's sexualised charge (an aspect imaginably absent or at least less apparent at its sister festival, the LFF). Nevertheless, the aforementioned subtle (and blatant) instances of good-natured 'misbehaviour' do fall within the collectively-negotiated LLGFF boundaries of the acceptable and appropriate. The below extract, by comparison, illustrates an example of a director going beyond the accepted playful norm and causing momentary discomfort to their on-stage LLGFF counterpart:

> *Director X [...] made.... a **very rude comment** that I then kind of **bantered** back to him. He was basically saying that he performed sexual favours for all the Opening Night films that he has been programmed for! [...] I was like "I don't think you actually have!" It was just this moment backwards and forwards on stage that **had everybody in stitches**... I'm sure it will be on BFI Live. Maybe it'll be **censored** actually on BFI Live... Because it's quite rude! What he said... I went bright red! And I was like "Oh my God! **I'm not letting you get away with that**!"*
>
> (Participant 2)

[171] (BFI, 2012f).

The above extract presents an example of an instance where misbehaviour begins to move beyond the good-natured exchanges and repartee that imbue the festival to a point where this jars and becomes unpalatable. There are, of course, far more significant (and at times murky) examples of organisational misbehaviour. For instance, some participants confessed that during the busy festival it was a relief to be able to 'duck out' of formal duties and just enjoy the festival atmosphere. Similarly, 'entitlement' of volunteers to complimentary drinks and canapés seems to be an area of acceptable transgression. As outlined in 3.3, one participant masqueraded as press in order to infiltrate the festival as an industry delegate. Perhaps most questionable of all, as discussed in *guarding boundaries* (3.1), was the alleged decision to dismiss a recently hired programmer upon discovering that they were, in fact, heterosexual. Through commonly accepted and rejected instances of 'misbehaviour', the organisational, societal and community-based norms that frame the festival are both reinforced and challenged, pushing both positively and menacingly at (more general) norms and at the accepted boundaries of the festival.

ANSWERING BACK:
TO THE MAINSTREAM, OTHER 'FOES' AND THE FESTIVAL ITSELF

When compared with the socio-political environment encompassing early festival iterations in the mid-1980s, today LGBT communities benefit from (though by no means universal) increased: visibility in the mainstream; legal equality; prevalence of positive discourses of inclusion and non-discrimination; social acceptance; and a more comprehensive and dynamic public awareness of LGBT identities and culture. Thus, the highly politicised enactment of and attendance at early festivals could be argued to have ebbed throughout the years, as overtly discriminatory practices have become increasingly distasteful and LGBT populations have secured increasing increments of equality. However, the very (continued) existence of the LLGFF was articulated by many participants as a defiance of the 'mainstream', which (although never clarified) was presumably perceived to be, at the very least, unsupportive of this overtly public exploration of queer cultures. Similarly, the festival's continued

enactment was often spoken of in terms of an annual successful 'battle' for 'survival'. This battle is perceived in different ways but an interesting dimension is that of assimilation. A simultaneous push and pull exists between a desire for our assimilation into the mainstream but also for the recognition and celebration of difference. Thus, the defiant aspect of the festival's existence can be considered as *answering back* to: either a 'mainstream' that would prefer to 'relegate' queer culture to community realms (rendering LGBTQ culture to them as mute and unseen); or, the selective assimilation and visibility of only 'sanitised' or *de-politicis[ed]* aspects of our culture.

A particularly salient example of the enactment of this practice whereby the activity of *answering back* was directed at the BFI has already been outlined earlier in this chapter: the reaction to the cuts of 2011. This took many forms: an online petition; the aforementioned Town Hall meeting; queer-media articles; the founding of 'Fringe!'; and the collective outrage aired by community members through social media. During the early-planning phases of the run-up to the 2012 festival explored in this thesis, this collective community uprising disparagingly painted the BFI as synonymous with the heterocentric mainstream adversary of above *[contesting ownership]*. The below extract, articulated by a participant with a long-established industry relationship with the LLGFF, summarises a community-wide chiding of the BFI's 'mistaken' undervaluing of the festival's importance:

> *I think it also **taught the BFI a rather sharp lesson** because **they didn't realise how important the festival is for BFI members**. A **lot of people only have their BFI membership so they can get tickets early for the LLGFF**. And... I believe that certain members of the BFI... **wanted to use the cuts as a means of actually stopping the festival**. And of offloading it. But they very quickly learnt... that would be a mistake. Which I think was a good learning curve for lots of people on the BFI board.*
>
> (Participant 11)

Although impossible to accurately gauge the impact of instances of community insurgency, many of the participants believed that it was the strength of community reaction that caused the BFI to reconsider their actions. These individuals attribute to the community both the *safeguarding* of the festival's continued existence and also rousing the reinstatement of an element of its former glory (i.e. partial restoration of its

longer, and until this point well-established, two-week form), as the following extract shows:

> *There was a pivotal movement where there was a **forum held to allow anyone who wanted to come and talk about the future of the festival**: what they needed to happen, what is wrong with it, if we actually need it. I mean **a question came up "Do we need this festival?"** [...] There was an overwhelming energy saying that it has to be reinstated, that this is horrible [...]. And **they listened**!*
>
> (Participant 6)

The relationship between the festival and its stakeholders, particularly audience members, is responsive *[2 Legitimising]* but a key facet of this is that the festival-organising community themselves invite an element of *answering back* through the provision of organised channels of communication for feedback. During the festival, audience opinions and suggestions are sought through anonymous questionnaires circulated and collected by volunteers. Festival-goers are further incentivised to take part by the chance to win prizes. In order to solicit feedback and build 'buzz', BFI members are invited by e-mail to 'Join the Conversation' about the LLGFF (on Twitter and Facebook) and are further invited to submit comments or evaluate the festival at its close. Throughout the festival, these social-media channels provide a mechanism through which to collect audience (and wider community) opinions and gauge satisfaction with various facets of the festival. Furthermore, prompts such as 'What did you think of film X?' are used in these channels in order to further elicit opinions. Aside from the 2011 cuts, the most prevalent criticism of the festival throughout the period of 2011-2013 has consistently been the frequent breakdown of the BFI's online-sales system (during the rush when booking opens) and the necessity of purchasing BFI membership in order to have any chance at securing tickets for most screenings: criticisms as yet unaddressed *[questioning/criticising festival]*.[172]

As has been elucidated, the festival's perceived (negative) transgressions elicit a powerful response from relevant stakeholders *[contesting ownerships]*. Ultimately, it is the continued responsiveness of the festival to community concerns — whether engaged

[172] The BFI is currently investing in a new online-booking system, which will be operational in time for the 2015 festival.

with through film, events or modification of the festival — that lends *legitim[acy]* to the LLGFF as community-based and which *safeguard[s]* its continued future. Similarly, it is the continued and abundant *answering back* and *contesting ownership* by LGBTQ individuals and film-community members that demonstrates just how valuable the festival continues to be for these communities *[2.3 Advocating (continued) Value of Festival]*.

The three practices explored above enable appreciation of the identity-forming and order-producing processes through which the normative bounds of acceptability at the festival are continuously reproduced (and challenged). The prevailing atmosphere of carnival celebration and fun may invoke good-natured misbehaviour but also facilitates reflexive and playful engagement with our cultural stereotypes. Similarly, the festival presents a safe and dynamic space for the transgression of societal norms (within collectively negotiated borders of appropriateness), such as those pertaining to appearance, professionalism, festival content, and sexualisation of cultural events and institutions. Such transgressions are identity-forming in that they tug at the boundaries of accepted societal and festival content and conduct.

5.4 - SUMMARY: INSIGHTS FROM 'PRACTICES OF NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES'

The data excerpts presented above illustrate that successfully *negotiating boundaries* is a vital aspect of the (continued and continuing) enactment of the festival. The enactment of the LLGFF has been shown to involve the incessant blurring, (re)establishing, eroding, reinforcing, crossing, teasing, reconfiguring, guarding, pushing and spanning of myriad interpenetrating boundaries pertaining to diverse dimensions of the festival. Through this, these three categories together act to successfully negotiate and establish the boundaries of what the festival is, who it (legitimately) serves (or does not), how it relates to individuals and communities, and what is acceptable and appropriate. It is evident from the above extracts that the festival exists in a state of flux and, in order to *safeguar[d]* its continued value and existence, must respond in each iteration to: evolving exogenous pressures, complex individual relationships, and the interests and concerns of its myriad stakeholders. Crucially, this negotiation of individual, festival and behavioural boundaries must be continuously performed and is an integral facet and mechanism of the continued successful enactment and dynamism of the LLGFF.

CHAPTER IV SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an assortment of forty-eight practices that are inextricably embedded within the fabric of the enactment of the 26th LLGFF. Five overarching thematic groupings were traced — (1) *Safeguarding*, (2) *Legitimising*, (3) *Gatekeeping*, (4) *Connecting*, and (5) *Negotiating Boundaries* — and the consideration of these practices (and themes) illuminates some of the meaning-making, identity-forming and order-producing processes that underpin the (continued and continuing) successful enactment of the LLGFF and its generative affect upon its constituent communities. Notably, the elicitation of these practices and categories are not an attempt to represent the 'totality' of the festival nor to reduce such a complex labyrinthine phenomena to a series of discrete concepts. Instead, the sixteen categories around which these practices are clustered both represent crucial and significant facets of the enactment of the festival and also facilitate the identification and mapping of key instances of connection and integration (and tensions) between and across practices and themes. Some of these linkages are considered in the following chapter (V: Discussion and Conclusions), which presents an integrative discussion alongside relevant theoretical and practical insights generated through consideration of these five themes and of the festival as a whole.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

In answer to the two principal guiding research questions indicated in 'Chapter III: Methodology' (see page 85), this study has thus far both identified and considered the practices involved in the enactment of a complex intermittent organisation (RQ1), the LLGFF, and has explored themes that emerge from these practices (RQ2). The manner in which these practices are interconnected (in some cases discordantly) has also been indicated through the use of italicised and bracketed references to other practices, categories or themes (RQ1/4). Aspects of emergent research questions RQ3 to RQ6 have also been illuminated in 'Chapter IV: Findings' and will be considered in more detail, where appropriate, throughout this chapter.

The following section, '1: Theoretical and Practical Insights', will: (1.1) indicate some theoretical insights that emanate from examination of these five themes within the framework of this thesis; and (1.2) present some of the more general practical insights of relevance to a range of organisations. Specific practical insights of interest to the organisation of study, the LLGFF, are located in Appendix 4. The second section, '2: Integrative Discussion and Summary', constitutes an integrative discussion that ties together and builds upon significant aspects unveiled throughout this study. Furthermore, in line with RQ1, it also elaborates upon how the practices identified constitute a process (underpinned by cementing and anchoring mechanisms), identified in this thesis, which has the potential to bolster continuity and transcend temporality and ephemerality (RQ6). This section also signals the main contributions of this thesis, highlights some limitations of this project, reflects upon the research process and comments upon potential avenues of fruitful future research.

1: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS

This chapter section will present a number of theoretical and practical insights (in 1.1 and 1.2 respectively) that emerge through consideration of the five themes — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting* and *Negotiating Boundaries* — explored within the framework of this thesis. The following sub-section will present theoretical insights; both those (somewhat) in line with extant literature and those that are novel, unexpected or more nuanced than previously suggested. These theoretical insights are as interlinked as the practices themselves and, thus, are not envisaged as fitting discretely within one theme. For purposes of clarity, however, these are considered below in a manner that reflects the thematic ordering of the previous chapter.

1.1 - THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

As outlined in Chapter II, similar to the wider creative industries and unlike more traditional organisational forms, festivals can be considered as a complex form of *intermittent* organisation comprising 'networks of practices' (Hibbert *et al*., 2007). These networks have been shown to be characterised by continuously evolving webs of practitioners, practices and forms of cultural exchange, which coexist and interpenetrate in a constant state of flux. This study has responded to Bechky's plea for scholarship that addresses temporary organisations whilst giving due consideration to the consequences of impermanence (2006: 4-5). In the case of the LLGFF, as has been shown and as will be further discussed, its potential ephemerality flows from: its intermittent nature; a lack of year-round staff; the limited volume of contracted paid staff (and the nature of their contracts – mostly annual, part-time and for a set period of the year); a heavy reliance upon volunteers; a plurality of telos; myriad stakeholders and layers of accountability; a shifting wider socio-political context; and issues around ownership and control.

However, examination of the LLGFF as a complex network of practices casts light upon those mechanisms that act to counter the potential transience of the festival, of which those around 'Safeguarding' have been shown to be key. Three main anchoring elements have been identified: 'tradition', a degree of adherence to established or traditional festival formats; 'remembering', continuous re-engagement with past enactments of the festival (through formal and informal storytelling and capturing, recording and formalising of material relating to each iteration); and 'place', spatial grounding of the festival (and its constituent communities). However, given that these particular 'safeguarding-related' insights are part of a wider processual model that constructs temporal continuity, they will be instead discussed in more detail in '2: Integrative Discussion and Summary'. Nevertheless, engagement with the theme of safeguarding also elicits a number of additional theoretical insights, considered below.

Building upon and extending from Nicolini, several examples highlighted in the previous chapter illuminate the role of artefacts in moulding practice: by enabling and limiting particular activities and thereby operating as boundary objects (2011). In particular, the practices of 'remembering' and 'archiving' are both sparked and controlled by the availability of appropriate materials, namely filmic artefacts. As suggested by Elliot and MacPherson (2010: 573), these artefacts can be seen to mediate and stabilize the meaning of activity within these practices. However, this study offers a somewhat more nuanced perspective as the examples presented fruitfully highlight our differentiated experience of and engagement with artefacts and, therefore, the performative nature of practice. For instance, although collective in nature, the primacy of personal experiences (and, in this case, varying levels and forms of enculturation) gives an idiosyncratic gloss to the practice of 'remembering'. Thus, this practice is enabled and arguably somewhat stabilised by filmic artefacts yet, these artefacts may be differentially understood/interpreted and thus engender more diverse idiosyncratic performances of the practice activity of 'remembering'. This is also a salient point in relation to how dominant historical narratives are understood and therefore revised or revisited, as the aforementioned controversial Leni Riefenstahl example demonstrates. Furthermore, 'knowledge' — i.e. of LGBTQ cultural history and traditions — is shown throughout to be emergent, not static, and located outwith individual minds and/or

organisations (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 274) and, as Nicolini suggests, becomes manifest and transpires through practice (2011: 603).

Building upon Gomez and Bounty's identification of a call to look beyond the overly micro perspective of many practice theorists and to lend greater consideration to the macro (2011: 934; see also Whittington, 2011: 185; Nicolini, 2009; Jarzabkowski, 2004), this thesis clearly demonstrates the importance of examining the mutually constitutive relationship between practices and wider socio-material worlds. As Gherardi and Perrotta indicate, delineating the boundaries of a practice is complicated given their relational nature and location within a wider field of social practices (2011: 598). The practices traced in 'Safeguarding' clearly reflect the interrelated nature of practice and the affects of wider social fields. In a similar vein, consideration of these practices has also revealed the effects spiraling out from the LLGFF to the wider world. For instance, as has been argued, the LLGFF has an order-producing role within queer culture as a preserver, archiver, guardian and facilitator[173] of contemporary queer cinema. Corradi *et al*.'s proposition that scholars should explore the societal impact of practice finds an ideal canvas in this research context (2010: 277). Echoing their sentiment, this project has demonstrated the value of considering those tendrils of influence that spiral outwards from a 'site'. For instance, aspects of this thesis have elucidated the place of the festival in shaping (and even creating) the layers of meaning enfolding the queer cultural canon (the festival's role in tastemaking will be further explored). Indeed, films screened during the festival have been considered as being interpreted by socialised audiences through frames of meaning that may actually originate or proliferate in some of these practices.

Another primary facet of this project has been exploration of the myriad and differential conceptualisations and enactments of 'Legitimising'. These findings enhance current FFS scholarship that highlights festivals as spaces in which conflicting economic and aesthetic values and interests are negotiated (Rhyne, 2009; Rüling & Pederson, 2010), in further illuminating aspects at play in the negotiation of cultural and political value. This thesis has asserted that, over and above its role as a stage upon

[173] The LLGFF arguably facilitates queer cinema through efforts to provide educational opportunities to young filmmakers, as well as industry-wide professional networking prospects (see sub-sections 1.3 and 4.1 of Chapter IV).

which these values are contested (at the level of and manifest in the balancing of specific filmic artefacts in each festival programme), the *festival itself* conveys value and meaning for multiple communities and stakeholders.

Departing from Nicolini's supposition that knowing becomes manifest through practice (2011: 603), in this context it is through engaging with the LLGFF through the activities of legitimising that *individual* varied conceptualisations of the festival's value, importance and accountability falls within reach. Furthermore, confirming Styhre's assertion that the organisational world is one of flux (2011), in highlighting the endlessly recursive and *particularly performative* nature of these practices, the uncertainty, flux and fluidity of the festival world come to the fore. However, it can be argued that each community group possesses a differentiated but general overarching 'collective conceptualisation' of the festival's aims and purpose; thus, legitimising mechanisms may be argued to have an overall patterning across stakeholder groups. In considering practices of legitimising (and how the relationship between 'valid' conceptualisations, legitimacy and festival criticisms is perceived) across different stakeholder groups, this thesis has illuminated an interpretative aspect to engagement in practices. That is, that practices can be differently interpreted, adopted and enacted by groups that are linked through congruent aims (i.e. the variegated enactment of 'validating festival' in sub-section 2.1 of Chapter IV). This offers a contribution in the form of a potential augmentation to Nicolini's model of practices as 'meaning-making, identity-forming, and order-producing activities' (2011: 602) in adding an interpretative dimension.

Following from Yakhlef (2010a), Geiger (2009), Gherardi (2009b: 539; 2008: 521) and Strati (2007: 62), the extracts utilised in the previous chapter allude to how impressions from the senses — sensible knowledge — are perceived, aesthetically judged, produced and reproduced through the bodily senses. Vocal consideration of the part that sensible impressions play in film evaluation, in prompting a 'gut reaction', was common to most interviews. Such considerations are particularly apparent in those extracts that relate directly to the processes of programming or justification of programmer decision making. This study has illuminated how sensible perceptions and aesthetic judgements are individual to each agent and shaped, in turn, by their specific

experiences and engagements with other socio-material practice worlds. This is especially evident across interviews with programmers but was also apparent within the field-diary given the researcher's own 'reactions' to particular films. However, reaffirming and building upon Gherardi (2009b) and FF scholar Rastegar (2012), this thesis has further shed light upon the role of particular 'cultural gatekeepers' (namely programmers but also queer media critics) in guiding and moulding wider tastes and notions of quality or 'timely' filmmaking. Thus, this thesis complements Gherardi's works exploring taste as 'a collective situated activity' (2009b: 535) by also demonstrating how taste is both locally contingent to the individual and also, crucially, wrought by extra-organisational associations (i.e. subjectivities, community entanglements etc. that shape the interpretations explored above). Indeed, as the previous chapter has illustrated, this insight is not limited to examples relating to film but extends to 'taste' regarding the perceived refinement of the enactment of multiple practices intertwined in the festival's operations.

Extrapolating somewhat from Gherardi and Perrotta's stress upon the importance of scholarly consideration of the wider institutional context of workplace practices (2011), this thesis corroborates their claim of its significance and also unveils a cyclical dimension of mutual influence between practices as enacted in a 'site' and their wider institutional context. For instance, the 2012 inclusion of intersex material, feminist pornography and a substantial volume of material showcasing minority voices (i.e. BME, trans and lesbian sub-cultures) does not have an extended festival lineage. This shift can be considered as reflective of: wider trends of queer cinema and the queer-festivals network; and, given the nature of the relationship between film and our world, ultimately of community and wider societal concerns. However, the repeated (re-)enactment of practices that leads to such programme formulations, such as 'pursuing own interests', could gradually shift the boundaries of acceptable and expected festival content, a change which, as previously explored, may (cyclically) impact outwardly upon the queer-film-festival circuit and queer-film industry.

Sunley *et al.* state that 'flexible weak-tie networks [are a] common theme in accounts of creative industries' (2011: 381), features of which are certainly evident in the preceding chapter. However, the practices explored in 'Gatekeeping' have

illuminated a more complex and nuanced picture than creative industries and festivals literature may suggest. The LLGFF was shown to comprise an enduring web of both paid and voluntary festival staff and both intimate and formal relations. Of critical interest, the LLGFF was also characterised by myriad simultaneous forms of engagement (i.e. involvement through multiple subjectivities or positionalities), a high volume of recurring 'staff' and the extreme longevity of some participants' involvement with the festival. Thus, although in a sense the festival only 'exists' as a cohesive organisation during its intermittent enactment, multiple actors pre-date each enactment and, as has been shown, the barriers to access into each tier of festival communities are rigorously guarded by and for highly-socialised actors.[174] Arguably, the core festival-organising community has a propensity towards stronger ties; whereas, many of the more extraneous elements, interactions and creative partnerships display a tendency towards weaker and more flexible ones with the potential to stimulate new ventures. Thus, considering the organising practices of the LLGFF (and its [interpenetrating] community[/ies]) unveils a dynamic that is surprising in the context of the mechanism of LPP, as delineated by Brown and Duguid (1991), whereby neophytes become enculturated knowledgeable insiders. In this sense, conversely, peripheral participation in numerous aspects of the LLGFF/communities is not necessarily a transitional phase of apprenticeship but, rather, is intrinsic to the nature of the festival community (and, also, LGBTQ communities).

This complex picture supports Sunley *et al.*'s proposal that the pervasive binary characterisation of organisational relations/forms into strong-ties 'community' and weak-ties 'collectivity' is somewhat arbitrary (2011: 378-381). Contrary to this widespread division of organisational forms, as described and critiqued by Sunley *et al*. (378-381), both aspects of this duality can, in fact, by traced at the festival. Following from Sunley *et al.*'s description (381), the LLGFF displays features of both: strong-ties community-based enterprise (close-knit communities, intimacy, durability and stability); and also those of a weak-ties collectivity ('diffuse networks, [...] temporary creative coalitions', goal-orientated, and 'fed by local buzz, shared meeting places and

[174] For instance, linking to Nicolini (2011), industry passes can be conceptualised as artefacts which function as boundary objects and delimit involvement with the implications/outcomes of practices, such as access to the Delegate Centre.

rich social networks'). Thus, given that the LLGFF is neither a purely strong-ties community-based endeavour (in the sense of an organisational community or grass-roots LGBTQ community), nor solely a temporary creative-collective enterprise (goal-orientated towards a high-brow festival showcasing 'the best in new queer cinema'), these findings are in keeping with Sunley's proposal that some creative relations cannot be easily 'encapsulated by the long-established bifurcation between strong and weak ties in existing community or collectivity approaches' (381).

As a high-profile (queer) festival, a surprising aspect that emerged during fieldwork was the invisibility of a clearly demarcated or even perceptible public-facing festival 'leader', an issue further complicated by the general blurring of intra-organisational boundaries. The festival does have a Senior Programmer, although this is not frequently communicated directly to festival audiences in a particularly noticeable manner. Similarly, the BFI Head of Exhibition and BFI Chief Executive contribute to the opening remarks of the print programme but are not visibly present throughout the festival except for attendance by the Head of Exhibition at the Opening and Closing Night Galas. Notably, when leadership was inferred by research participants from across the festival organisation, reference was primarily made to the Senior Programmer or a usually face-less BFI parent institution (but never to the BFI Festivals team). It is pertinent to consider questions of leadership as the explicit judgements and goals/aims articulated by leaders could, building upon Elliot and MacPherson (2010: 573), be considered as artefacts that seep into and mould interrelated practices.

A final gatekeeping-related point that has been alluded to throughout this thesis, and which will also be further explored later in this chapter, is the generative potential of a socialised researcher. Whittington advocates that practice theorists are in common agreement regarding the importance of moving beyond empiricism and placing value upon the reflexive input of a socialised researcher (referencing Rouse [2007], in 2011: 184-185). The positive implications of adequate researcher socialisation (and the ability to convey this) in being accepted as a trustworthy confidant and benefitting from enhanced observation have been demonstrated throughout this thesis.[175] The potential to generate insights based on a 'within and below' position — within the gate — rather

[175] A significant example having been noted in sub-section 3.1 of Chapter IV (see page 210).

than 'outside and above' (Eikeland & Nicolini 2011: 166; see also Whittington, 2011: 184-185) are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, in sub-section '2.3 – *Theoria*'.

As Nicolini suggests, a 'coherent practice-based approach is inherently relational because it brings relationships and connections to centre stage' (2011: 603). This thesis offers a contribution that explores and illuminates this aspect with regards to the festival and its stakeholders, highlighting relationships and connections as a vital facet of organisational enactment. The abundance of interrelations between practices (and categories and themes) highlighted throughout this study correlates with Nicolini's proposition and is indicative of the rich texture within which these practices are enacted. This relatively unique research setting also reveals a striking level of interdependence between the LGBTQ and film communities. The research site is characterised by both prompting ripple-like effects outwards across multiple dimensions and also being impacted by similar waves of influence. The LLGFF encompasses a miscellaneous ensemble of practices that are in no way constrained by the organisational boundaries of the festival itself. Thus, attempts have been made in the themes explored and the extracts selected throughout to illuminate the complex interrelations between the festival and wider structures such as LGBTQ communities and sub-cultures, queer socio-political concerns, LLGFF staff, the queer-film industry, the queer-festivals circuit and the canon of queer cinema. It is pertinent to note here that Gherardi and Perrotta postulate that the (restrictive) focus upon the situatedness of practice somewhat hampers consideration of the wider institutional context of practices (2011: 596-597; echoed by Whittington, 2011: 185). This research setting, a LGBTQ-film festival, is undoubtedly a very particular and unusual organisational form, one where we may expect to find a very specific and defined contextual setting that is witness to the enactment of these practices. Nevertheless, somewhat contrary to Gherardi and Perrotta's assertion, as this study has demonstrated the (particularly) situated nature of these practices can also, conversely, in fact illuminate relationships, connections and flows of interest or influence outwards from the research site.

Extrapolating from and augmenting Rastegar's 2012 assertion that festival programming can shape our access to films by influencing film-based media attention

and industry deal-making, this thesis has identified an additional manner in which festivals shape our access to films. Consideration of the festival's ripple-like effects into a wider context elucidates, in particular, the interconnectedness of the LLGFF and the queer-film industry. This thesis has articulated an understanding of the festival's order-producing role for both the UK (and broader international) queer-film industry in both showcasing queer cinema and in offering a crucial point of *connection between* filmmakers and potential audiences.[176] Given that LGBTQ cinema does not usually secure a (wide) cinematic release, the majority of our 'access' to films is in the form of online streaming or DVDs (usually purchased online as, due to queer cinema's 'specialist-interest' nature, it is not readily available from high-street or large retailers). Thus, LGBTQ-festival attendees, whether members of the queer-media or the public, often offer a unique point of connection to a wider prospective audience through attendees' potential to create a digital presence around a film (e.g. through formal and informal recommendations, blog entries etc.). Furthermore, as argued in 'Connecting', the LLGFF provides a vital socialising platform for *connection within* the queer-film industry in fostering professional networking and educational opportunities. The order-producing consequential long-term impact upon the queer-film industry could be argued to be a clear example of, following from Corradi *et al*. (2010), how micro-level processes (re-)create macro-level phenomena. Additionally, the repeated annual order-producing re-enactment of the LLGFF within its generally stable contextual bounds is in part safeguarded by the robust and enduring nature of the well-established connections that criss-cross the festival (i.e. with *Skillset* or prominent distributors such as *Peccadillo Pictures*).

As has been demonstrated, the festival can be considered as a key 'site' within which the practices explored in the previous chapter are enacted. Extrapolating from Yakhlef's argument that the lived-body is a point of access to and site of entry to practices (2010: 410-22), the LLGFF has been argued to proffer a crucial point of physical connection for queer filmmakers and their audiences. As Nicolini suggests, for each practice the concept of the 'site' invites expectation of another (differentiated) site where another pattern of practices are performatively and recursively enacted (2011:

[176] Similarly, the festival's order-producing role in 'approving', securing, formalising, propagating (through film education) and preserving the queer-cinema canon is elucidated throughout this thesis.

604). In this context, comparisons could be drawn in future studies with the community-based festival 'Fringe!', particularly as a number of the LLGFF's (more peripheral) contracted casual staff and volunteers are involved with both festivals (some of whom could be considered as members of the 'Fringe!' festival-elite [i.e. as programmers]).

Nevertheless, somewhat incongruent to Nicolini's concept of the 'site' as suggestive of the rootedness of action in the sites where it occurs, a blurring of the temporal and spatial boundaries of the LLGFF is apparent. An interesting dimension of the LLGFF that has emerged in recent years is its online interactions with individual LGBTQ community members and filmmakers. In this sense, the webs of connection that permeate the festival can be seen to extend beyond the spatial (and temporal) bounds of the LLGFF itself, across social networks and queer-media platforms to connect with LGBTQ individuals across the globe, most of whom may never become actual 'physical' attendees. This is an aspect of festivals that is currently under-theorised within FFS, which conceptualise festivals as temporally and spatially bounded 'temporary organisations' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319) that may 'lack in permanence' (Iordanova, 2009: 26).

Furthermore, this phenomenon is by no means restricted to festivals. This spatial (and temporal) blurring of organisational boundaries will become ever more prevalent in an ever-increasingly hyper-connected world and, thus, the prevailing conceptualisation of 'site' may prove too narrow as scholars increasingly have to attend to uncertain, blurred or unstable organisational boundaries. Ultimately, it is through the enactment of such practices, rather than consideration of static artefacts (i.e. films) or subjects (i.e. programmers), that the rich texture of the (re-)production of social meaning and relations across and beyond the festival can be best understood as an '*ongoing* social accomplishment' (Orlikowski, 2002: 249, in Corradi *et al*., 2010: 274, my emphasis). Further to this, consideration of such organisational blurring displaces focus upon the direct *physical* interaction of the site. This augments Corradi *et al*.'s linkage of knowing-in-practice with sensible knowledge and aesthetic judgement (2010: 275) and Orlikowski's suggestion of knowing-in-practice as 'constituted and reconstituted as actors engage in a world of practice' (2002: 249) imbued with '*face-to-*

face interactions, [...] learning-by-doing and participation' (Corradi *et al*., 2010: 274, my emphasis; in reference to Orlikowski, 2002: 249).

The preceding chapter has demonstrated the highly socialised nature, on multiple levels, of the festival's inner cores (for instance, in extracts relating to the ability to anticipate festival audiences or film popularity). This provides an interesting empirical example that complements Styhre's account of highly-socialised expert practitioners' intuitive thinking (2011: 114-120). His account sits well amongst the body of works exploring practice and organisational learning or knowing-in-practice. His argument that intuition is a 'principal source for skilled [expert] practice' (114), facilitated by internalised taken-for-granted competencies (imperceptible to neophytes), has been reflected throughout Chapter IV. Indeed, socialisation within the context of an identity-based film festival has been shown to be particularly complex and nuanced. 'Negotiating Boundaries' has further explored the blurring of personal and private that enhances an agent's socialisation and, tellingly, their 'perceived' fit and understanding of relevant wider social phenomena such as stereotypes.[177] In accordance with Whittington (2011: 185), this demonstrates the importance of scholarly consideration of broader concerns rather than maintaining a focus upon the micro. This thesis also contributes a rich empirical example that reflects how, as Reckwitz (2002: 257) suggests, each individual agent is a unique crossing point of the embodied enactment of a number of diverse practices. However, in a manner unlike that of many practice-based studies, this thesis has offered insights around an additional layering contributing to this 'crossing point' in considering the blurring of subjectivities; for instance, in demonstrating how in the case of the festival programmers their 'expertise' can be partially seen to relate to their myriad community engagements and personal identifications.

In a manner similar to that suggested by extant LPP literature, and given the very particular and complex nature of the LLGFF, movement towards the inner tiers of the festival elite has been shown to necessitate a protracted involvement with the festival. This is because tacit understanding of its underlying mechanisms can only be

[177] It could even be argued that a degree of personal socialisation to LGBTQ cultures has effectively operated as pre-requisite for involvement with the festival, as the example of the overlooked heterosexual programmer could attest (see *misbehaving* in sub-section 5.3 of Chapter IV).

accessed through extended and repeated meaningful participation. However, a novel theoretical insight comes to the fore in considering the nature of 'misbehaving' outlined in the previous chapter. Certainly, (as expected) those at the fringes of the festival engaged in 'play', mischievous tongue-in-cheek behavioural asides and even the bending of rules (for instance the pilfering of canapés by volunteers or the playful dressing-up of attendees at the Glam Rock night). Nevertheless, as the previous chapter has indicated, misbehaviour manifests as an intrinsic element of the enactment of the LLGFF by myriad overlapping communities and, indeed, is a facet of all aspects of these communities' engagements. That is to say that those whom we would identify as the encultured knowledgeable (professional) inner-core members of the festival-elite community(/ies) routinely engage in and, in fact, celebrate 'misbehaving'. It is possible to speculate that this is an aspect not common to festivals (i.e. this would be unexpected at the LFF) but is, in fact, a function of community-building and cultural expression located at the overlap of the festival and the wider queer communities.

The relationship between the BFI 'parent-organisation' and the festival itself has the potential to impact upon the enactment of practices (which do not fit discretely within organisational boundaries). This is an avenue of inquiry that is not well developed in extant practice literature (which, in addressing non-traditional organisational forms, focuses more upon inter-organisational or network-based collaboration) nor in studies of festivals or temporary organisations. Bechky warns that current scholarship addressing temporary organisations applauds the flexibility that it affords (2006: 4) without giving due consideration to the consequences that flow from its 'ephemeral' nature (3) and lack of permanent structure and hierarchy (5). Thus, it is possible to infer that established theoretical expectations are such that this parent-institution arrangement could provide a degree of stability. However, this thesis offers a contribution of an initial exploration of this relational dynamic, which suggests that whilst this particular arrangement provides continuity and a degree of security (through organisational grounding) it can also prompt questions of 'ownership' and discordant conceptualisations of accountability and legitimacy. This relatively unusual arrangement has also been demonstrated to impact upon the negotiation of festival scope. Furthermore, following from Nicolini (2011), this could be argued to reflect an aspect of the site-based nature of practices enacted at the LLGFF (i.e. the same

negotiations are not part of the 'Fringe!' queer film festival). This insight also constitutes a contribution in answer to the call of FFS scholars for critical consideration of the organisation of film festivals (e.g. Rüling & Pederson, 2010; Loist, 2011).

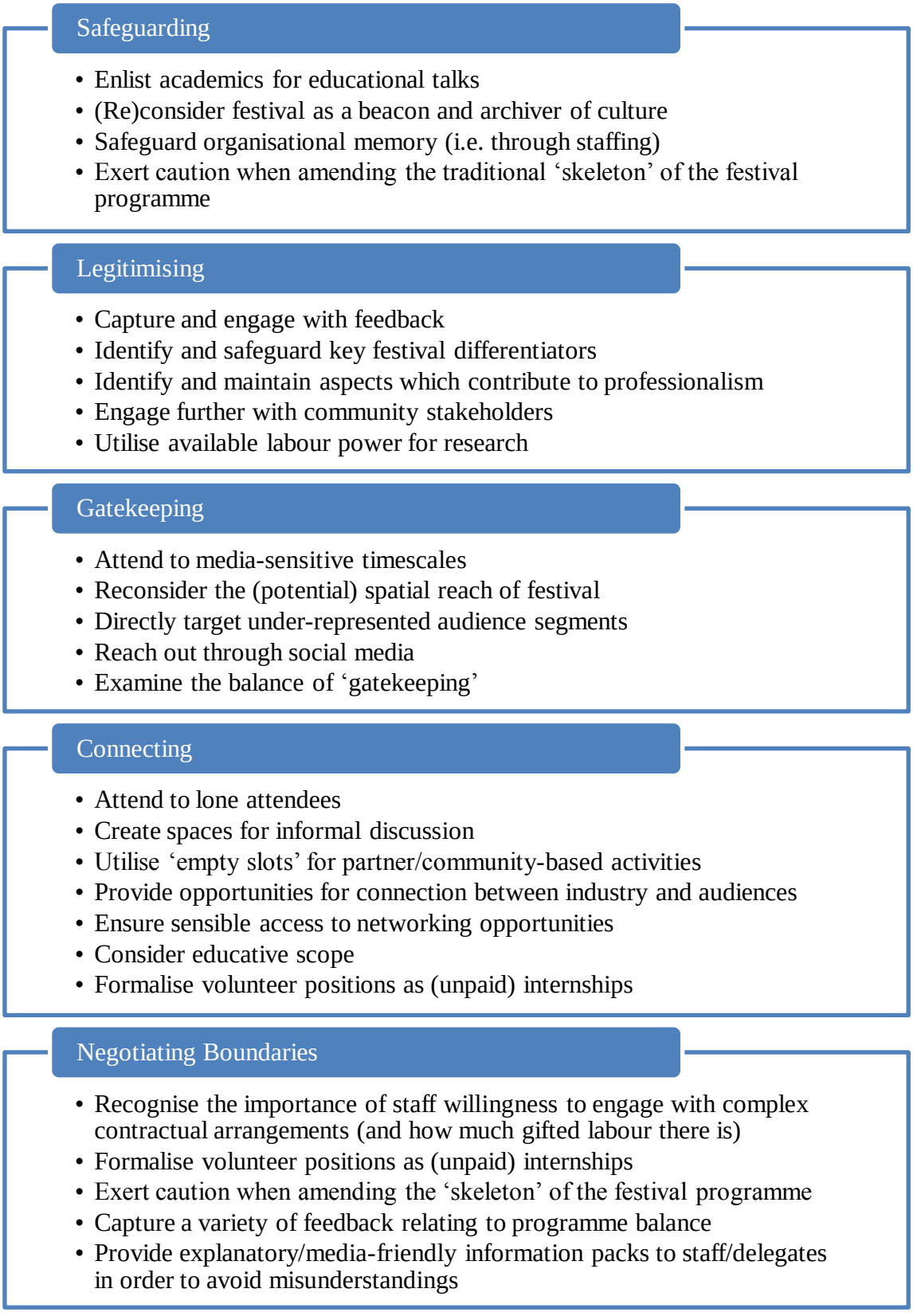
In exploring the practices that act to establish the contextual boundaries of the festival, Sandberg and Tsoukas' teleological structure can be appreciated (2011: 343). It is clear that this structure, within the context of the LLGFF, orientates practitioners towards pursuing certain ends and also provides parameters for the enactment of organisational practices. For instance, the influence of industry capacity and financial targets upon the practices of festival programming is echoed in participants' comments regarding being aware of the need to strategise and avoid risk through effective timetabling and balancing of stakeholders. However, given the plurality of festival stakeholders, accountabilities, 'duties' (both formal and informal) and 'legitimate' conceptualisations, it could be argued that the teleological structure of the festival reflects this multiplicity and presents a complexity that is not mirrored in many forms of organisation. Looking outwards however, it is possible to speculate that such a convoluted teleological structure may be found in other identity-based festivals, organisations within the wider creative and cultural industries (e.g. festivals, museums, heritage organisations or cultural institutes) and some aspects of the public sector (e.g. universities or the health service).

1.2 - PRACTICAL INSIGHTS

A number of practical insights have emerged through consideration of the enactment of the LLGFF and the practices and themes indicated in this project. Practical insights of specific interest to the organisation of study are indicated in Figure 68, 'LLGFF Feedback Report: Actionable Practical Insights arising from Research Project', in Appendix 4. Those insights with more universal or widespread potential relevance, to both (identity-based or cultural) festivals and other forms of intermittent organisation, are indicated within this sub-section. In some instances, many of these insights and suggestions may also be of value to stakeholders in temporary or project-based organisations. Furthermore, these practical insights may also be of interest to the field of Film Festival Studies, especially as current FFS scholars have identified the study of the organisation of festivals as an interesting and understudied research area (Loist, 2011: 268; de Valck & Loist, 2009).

Prior to a consideration of the most pertinent *integrated* practical insights, the overleaf Figure 49 provides a very brief overview of some thematic-based practical insights that are of general interest. As many of these insights relate to those indicated in the aforementioned report in Appendix 4 ('LLGFF Feedback Report: Actionable Practical Insights arising from Research Project'), further information and related detailed examples (relating to the LLGFF) can be found therein.

Figure 49: Thematic-based generalisable practical insights



The most pertinent *integrated* practical insights are considered in more detail below. These are themed around three main areas: ensuring temporal continuity (Figure 50), enhancing festival experience (Fig. 51) and organisational suggestions (Fig. 52).

Figure 50: Ensuring temporal continuity suggestions

Engage with organisational memory

- Archive festival materials and engage with festival 'anniversaries', as well as those relevant to constituent communities. Similarly, recognise the importance in an intermittent organisation of retaining key figures, whether paid or voluntary, that are highly socialised to the organisation and other central aspects. It is pertinent to note whether much of the temporal glue that bonds iterations across time and emits an enduring sense of 'festival' resides within a core group of individuals with a protracted involvement with the festival. It is important to recognise this and the potential impact of a significant change in festival staffing. This is a salient point that should be addressed in the context of other festivals and, indeed, other intermittent organisations.

Examine which elements buttress longevity

- It is important to explore, understand and retain those elements of a festival that buttress its longevity, for instance adherence to established formats (or knowing what should evolve). Similarly, the importance of key structures and systems that underpin the professionalism of any of the more institutionalised festivals must be recognised (e.g. booking systems or industry provision).

Maintain legitimising mechanisms

- A festival's legitimacy is continuously consolidated in three key dimensions: the fulfilment of the differing conceptualisations of a festival; the success and value of each individual iteration for myriad stakeholders; and the affirmation of the festival's future role and significance. Thus, in order to ensure continuing legitimacy, it is imperative to capture, document and safeguard the legitimising mechanisms for each of these dimensions.

Facilitate neophyte industry partners

- For all festivals, the web of existing 'associations' may be impenetrable to someone lacking a point of connection to the network and a sense of nepotism may prevail, perhaps even deterring some of those on the fringes wishing to break in from trying. Industry partners, and consequentially festivals themselves, require a constant flow of 'new talent', which festivals have a role in nurturing. Furthermore, festivals with an industry-provision facet should pay heed to ensuring a balance between the mechanisms underlying access and control.

The below suggestions for 'enhancing the festival experience', detailed in Figure 51, could be fruitfully incorporated by many (and, indeed, very different) arts festivals in order to enhance the 'experience' of festival attendees. Such incorporation is only possible if festival organisers have access to appropriate spaces and this would not incur (significant) additional costs. However, integration with community organisations and the incorporation of additional free events will, of course, depend upon an individual festival's accepted and expected mandate and its 'contextual boundaries'.

Figure 51: Enhancing the festival experience suggestions

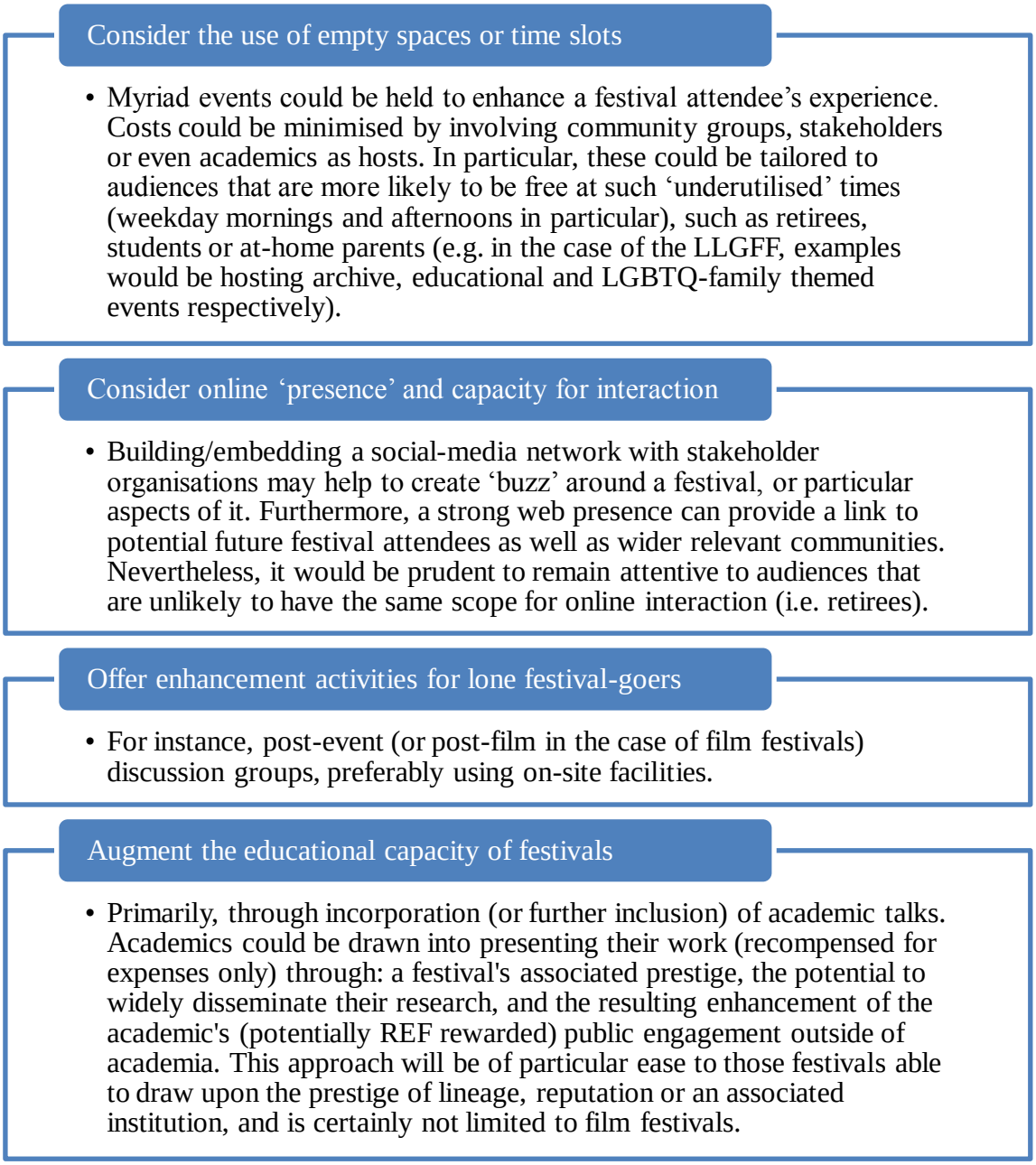


Figure 52: Organisational suggestions

Re-affirm and clarify project goals

- Re-affirm project goals and clarify evolving or shifting aspects of a project. The provision of information packs or regular meetings/e-mails/briefings presents an economical and straightforward mechanism to circumvent misunderstandings. The prevention of misinformation or misunderstandings is of universal importance to both festivals and other forms of temporary or project-based organisations (wherein individuals may be engaged only for a short period or in a role that does not afford or encourage direct access to contextual yet key information).

Capture feedback in an organised fashion

- Capture informal feedback through social-media channels in a deliberate and organised fashion. This, coupled with formal feedback and appropriate data analytics, could provide valuable insight into festival audiences and attendance trends.

Attend to festival 'reach'

- Adequate consideration of current audiences and potential ones, as well as exploration of how to reach out to under-represented segments of a festival audience, is crucial for continued survival (and 'legitimacy'). For instance, by reaching out to youth organisations or university groups through dedicated and orchestrated 'concession' screenings teamed with an educational talk. Furthermore, in the case of identity-based arts festivals, archive cinema and (occasional) educational events exploring histories and sub-cultures have a role in the cross-generational transmission of collective experiences and are clearly of great value.

Attend to festival stakeholders

- Remain attentive to a festival's role within a wider industry web, network or circuit. For instance, 'connecting' activities are not only of value to industry figures but they also represent a crucial rare instance of industry place-making.

Maximise upon the potential of internships

- In the current employment climate, internships, both paid and unpaid, offer an extremely valuable experience for students and graduates. Such individuals have the enthusiasm and (fledgling) skills to undertake analytics, marketing, outreach etc., and could be drawn from the film and media disciplines and beyond. Furthermore, there are numerous government funding initiatives for graduate internships that could be utilised, such as 'Adopt an Intern'. Skilled and socialised volunteers are clearly an asset, and such steps should be considered by all festivals.

2: INTEGRATIVE DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The practices identified and explored in this thesis through the thematic framework employed in 'Chapter IV: Findings' have shed new light upon aspects of the dynamic intersection between practice-based studies, festival-based studies (and studies of temporary or project-based organisations) and film-festival studies. This thesis seeks to contribute to these fields and to also offer a novel bridge between organisation studies and film-festival studies. Further to the theoretical and practical insights indicated in the previous section, this section aims to present an integrative discussion that links together and further develops some of the overall contributions that emerge from this research. Four significant aspects are considered, including: (2.1) a processual model, presented in this thesis, which contributes to continuity, and enables the transcending of temporality; (2.2) practices of *communities*; (2.3) *theoria* (that is, theoretical insight based on self-reflective articulation from within practical experience); and (2.4) the contribution offered to FFS. Finally, the overall contributions of this thesis will be summarised, some comments noted regarding the limitations of this project, and some reflections upon the research process and potential avenues of fruitful future research outlined.

2.1 - LLGFF: A MODEL FOR TRANSCENDING TEMPORALITY?

Through the tracing of the forty-eight practices identified, this thesis has revealed an aspect of the wider field of practice that has not yet been fully examined by practice-based studies: the *cementing* or *anchoring* mechanisms that contribute to continuity in intermittent, temporary or project-based organisations.

Indeed, temporal continuity is an underdeveloped theme in accounts of communities of practice or practices of a community in relation to temporary or intermittent organisations. Within this context, practices are generally not continuously recursively (re-)enacted but, rather, lie 'dormant' during a latent period. This latency and the necessary 're-emergence' of practice — as and when such intermittent organisations appear, disappear and re-appear (and within particular 'stages' of this cycle) — is not accounted for within the existing body of theories of practice. This is a salient point as FF are perceived by FFS scholars as 'temporary organisations' (Rüling & Pederson, 2010: 319) that may 'lack in permanence' (Iordanova, 2009: 26). Furthermore, Bechky advocates that considerations of temporary organisations do not give due consideration to the negative consequences that flow from its 'ephemeral' nature (2006: 3) and lack of permanent structure and hierarchy (5). Thus, identifying and critically considering those mechanisms that have the potential to transcend temporality and ephemerality, and, in fact, contribute to continuity and facilitate practice 're-emergence', is of significant theoretical (and practical) interest.

Consideration in this study (crucially, through the framework of the practice-lens) of a temporary organisation that enjoys a degree of temporal continuity has shed light upon mechanisms that contribute to its continued enactment. Thus, the model presented in this thesis — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting*, and *Negotiating Boundaries* — is offered as a potential preliminary description of how (intermittent and/or festival) communities are maintained and propagated, thus contributing to sustaining an *enduring* temporary organisation. It should be noted, however, that the period of fieldwork directly relates to one festival iteration only. Nevertheless, the researcher is informed by a wider understanding of the festival through time, developed from: accounts of other iterations; attendance at past iterations

and continued engagement (digitally) with subsequent iterations; general research and exploration of festival history; and the longevity of research participants' involvement with the festival. Relating to RQ6 ('[...] what are the processes that support the festival's continued enactment?'), reflections upon what this model reveals about how festivals and temporary/intermittent organisations are enacted — and how the five contributory elements are operationalised — have been considered throughout this thesis. Some of these are elaborated upon in more detail below: particularly those relating to 'Safeguarding', which has been identified as central and key to building continuity.

A central element in overcoming the fleeting nature of festivals has been shown to be the (re-)construction and safeguarding of a sense of (temporal) continuity. This is achieved in a number of ways, three of which are outlined below: 'tradition', 'remembering' and 'place'. The most apparent is a degree of adherence to established or 'traditional' festival formats. However, the evolving nature of traditions and of the diverse elements of the wide festival remit also elucidates the contextual and emergent nature of practice. Secondly, continuous re-engagement with past enactments of the festival, through formal and informal storytelling (i.e. anniversary 'history of the LLGFF' lectures and sharing anecdotes), contributes to the ongoing construction of and conveyance of a (partial) festival narrative.[178] In attempting to capture this narrative, it is important to look beyond the discrete annals of festival programmes. Instead, a crucial facet has been shown to be augmentation of the chronicle of the LLGFF through capturing, recording and formalising multifaceted aspects of the festival (i.e. through the memory board). This facilitates better appreciation (and preservation) of its complexity and of our differential engagements with it both within iterations and diachronically. Thirdly, the spatial (and organisational) grounding of the LLGFF at the BFI Southbank not only highlights the site-specific enactment of these practices but also illuminates the annual and *expected* (re-)construction of the BFI Southbank as a (temporary but recurring) fecund (festival, industry and LGBTQ) community space. This also reaffirms Nicolini's supposition that practice is rooted in the site wherein it is enacted (2011) and

[178] For instance, a recent addition to the festival's Facebook account is a photograph album of programme covers from previous years (1986-2012, but no additions since). See <https://www.facebook.com/llgff/photos_albums>.

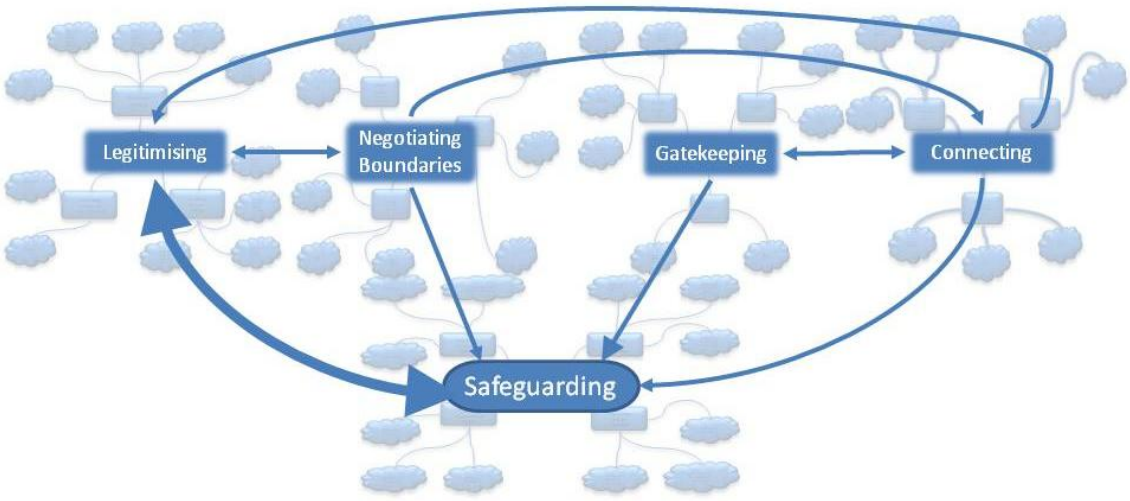
builds upon Corradi *et al.* (2010) in demonstrating the wider societal impact of practice. The festival, in its current formation, has come to be considered as a key and indispensible feature of the queer cultural calendar in London, which some participants suggested had a cumulative transformative effect upon the local area. These three mechanisms can thus be seen to underpin the permanence of the LLGFF's continued enactment. Additionally, through the repeated approximated re-enactment of their associated practices, these mechanisms buttress structural elements of the festival and affect a degree of relative adherence to an established 'form'. In this sense, these three recursive mechanisms — tradition, remembering, and place — can be understood as safeguarding anchors that act to circumvent ephemerality. Thus, each festival iteration is moulded by its predecessors and their (contribution to) collective history. Following from Corradi *et al.* (2010: 276), this highlights the historically situated and provisional nature of the contextual and emergent enactment of the practices that permeate each festival.

Moving beyond 'Safeguarding', anchors of temporal continuity have also been traced in the previous chapter across the other four themes. The continual reaffirming (and rebalancing) of the three conceptualisations relating to legitimacy (and continued organisational value) has been posited as a contextually anchoring legitimising process that buttresses the *perceived* continued value, and therefore the place/role, of the festival for its communities. For example, in relation to the community-centred conceptualisation, careful decision-making relating to adequately representing LGBTQ sub-cultures in film/event programming reinforces the validation of this festival conceptualisation and, therefore, the festival's perceived value for LGBTQ communities and *continued* role in community meaning-making. Similarly, through the activities of 'Gatekeeping' and 'Connecting', the festival (re-)creates value for and also propagates (and creates vital overlaps between) the LGBTQ, queer-cinephile and queer-film-industry communities that are critical to its continued enactment. This would not be possible without the cementing of a highly socialised festival elite, and the processes in place to protect its membership and ensure it remains as such. Furthermore, this core group provides an anchor of organisational enactment across iterations (through excellent retention rates and the longevity of involvement), which waits in the wings during latent periods but is ever ready to emerge to lead the enactment of subsequent

iterations. Furthermore, the combined activities of 'Connecting' and 'Negotiating Boundaries' are crucial in ensuring that valued aspects of the festival (such as the relatively unique opportunity for collectively experiencing, engaging with stereotypes or connecting with diverse elements of wider communities) maintain their relevance, and those aspects of less importance are able to, through time, fade away with subsequent redefinitions of festival scope. Furthermore, the LLGFF enjoys an anchor uncommon to most organisations: its rootedness in a parent organisation. Whilst this anchor may enable the festival to weather volatility in the wider industry and/or socio-economic climate, this also presents a double-edged sword. This anchor is not completely infallible, as the 2011 cuts demonstrate. In fact, this anchor can also 'drag' and can infringe upon the agility of the festival to change course in response to emergent concerns due to the (somewhat cemented) myriad expectations placed upon the festival through its filial attachment to a national institution.

Thus, the five emergent themes discussed throughout this thesis can be seen to operate as tributaries to a process that supports the festival's continued enactment. Figure 53, below, offers a diagrammatic representation of the most significant aspects of this process, as considered throughout this thesis. Crucially, however, as the abundance of linkages between practices/categories indicated in the previous chapter suggests, flows (and counter-flows) do exist between and across all five elements. Thus, the arrows indicated below signal the directional flows of greatest significance within

Figure 53: LLGFF - a model that transcends temporality



the context of continuity and transcending temporality. In two instances these arrows/arrow-heads are weighted to signal a particularly strong relationship or influence, as explored in the previous chapter. Within this context, 'Safeguarding' can be seen to offer both a repository of and fortification of organisational memory. The relationship between 'Legitimising' and 'Safeguarding' has been explored as one of critical mutual reinforcement; the festival's prestigious lineage and continued value is key to its legitimacy and, concurrently, it is the festival's continually reconstituted legitimacy that safeguards its future. The critical consideration of 'Gatekeeping' and 'Connecting' has unveiled their central importance in protecting myriad festival communities (e.g. through guarding boundaries yet also reaching out or facilitating networking and community-building), which has been indicated as a key facet of safeguarding. Similarly, the activities of 'Connecting' generate value for the festival's constituent communities and, thus, serve to 'validate' and enhance the legitimacy of the festival. Furthermore, underpinning legitimacy, it is through the continual negotiation of the contextual boundaries of the festival that its provision for such communities continues to have value, relevance and significance, and that this legitimacy is (continuously) identified, upheld and safeguarded.

Ultimately, this thesis has illuminated the complex web of practices that intersect during the enactment of the LLGFF (many of which will be a feature, in some regard, of arts-based festivals generally). Through consideration of the five emergent themes, the potential impact of emergent practice or rapid evolution of existing practice in reshaping (and distorting) the 'web' has been alluded to and reflected upon at times throughout this study (and in a concrete fashion in the practical insights). Such change could lead to perceived improvements but may also 'break' the web. Nevertheless, the practices identified and presented herein constitute a processual model conceptualised as presenting five robust and indispensible strands within this web, which collectively reinforce an organisational memory that survives latency and facilitates the re-emergence of practice; thus, enabling organisations to endure across intermittent enactment and, ultimately, transcend temporality and ephemerality.

2.2 - PRACTICES OF COMMUNITY(/IES)

With regards to RQ5 ('What place does the festival have and what role does it play for its constituent communities?'), the productive, nuanced and essential relationship between the festival and its constituent communities has been discussed at numerous junctures throughout this thesis. However, this research offers a novel insight into the generative potential of practice in a research context that is imbued with additional complex and overlapping layers of community in comparison to most organisations. As noted earlier in this chapter, somewhat contrary to the expected dynamic, peripheral participation in numerous aspects of the LLGFF/communities is not necessarily a transitional phase of apprenticeship but, rather, is intrinsic to the nature of the festival community (and, also, LGBTQ communities). In this sense, it is relevant to marry such insight with developments in the CoP literature and the previously discussed shift in focus to *practices of a community*. As Gherardi suggests, 'it is the activities themselves that generate a community in that they form the "glue" which holds together a configuration of people, artefacts and social relations' (2009c: 523). This thesis has demonstrated how the enactment of the practices that underpin the LLGFF does, in fact, engender community but also indicates the plurality of communities and how practice binds these diverse elements together. Thus, it is through the enactment of practice that the festival community and its myriad associations are tied together both within and across (temporary) iterations. Ultimately, the generative potential of practice for communit*ies* is offered as a contribution and has been considered in the previous chapter in relation not only to the festival but also to LGBTQ, queer-cinephile, queer-filmmaking, queer-film-industry, queer-programming, festival-organising, festival-enacting, and wider LGBTQ-film-festival-circuit communities.

2.3 - *THEORIA*

Perriton and Hodgson propose that practice is 'a relational process'— rather than a readily discoverable phenomena in the organisational world — and 'the product of a complex interplay of a range of different elements' that *includes* the researcher (2013: 152). Building upon this and reaffirming the insightful work of Eikeland and Nicolini (2011), this thesis seeks to contribute to an understanding of the value of the 'within and below' immersed researcher and the generation of, where possible, *theoria*. Such insight, based upon self-reflective articulation from within practical experience, potentially enables a researcher to move away from the application of extraneous concepts, models and metaphors.

As someone socialised (to varying degrees) to some central aspects of the festival, arguably the researcher enjoyed: enhanced access to the research site as an 'in-group' member; community 'knowledge' that enhanced observation and interviews (i.e. of community-based norms, queer cinema, political concerns and recognition of industry figures); and immersion within many dimensions of practice enacted during the festival (i.e. 'evaluating film' as a socialised community member on multiple levels). Furthermore, through protracted involvement in the organising communities of a student LGBT society (and two years at the helm), LGBT Alumni Association and Students' Representative Council (Students' Association), I have some indirect but potentially relevant experience relating to some of the practices explored. This includes: 'constructing community space', 'cultivating communities' and 'events organising' (i.e. through provision of events and growing membership); 'perpetuating through education' (i.e. in organising talks by academics, such as queer-cinema scholars or queer cultural commentators); 'sustaining wide organisational remit' and 'recognising stakeholders' (i.e. in attending to different groups and maintaining a diverse calendar of events); 'archiving' (i.e. through involvement in an LGBT History Month exhibition and the organisation and deposition of society archives with the LGBT archive at the Glasgow Women's Library); 'connecting communities' (i.e. through bringing together LGBTQ students from the 1970s to present day in the Alumni Association, of which I am a founding member); and 'educating outsiders' (i.e. through involvement with

diversity training for Students' Association staff and preliminary work relating to the organisation acquiring LGBT Youth Scotland Charter Mark status).

Following from Eikeland and Nicolini's critique that 'the practice studied remains the practice of the others' and the 'practice turn has been interpreted mainly from a traditional stance as another way of observing, interpreting, and explaining work, organising and activity from the "outside" [...]' (2011: 167), aspects of this thesis are broadly aligned with their call for practice-based studies wherein researchers 'start from "below" and "within", that is from being practically immersed in the practice being studied' (166). Crucially however, this alignment is rooted in the researcher's socialisation to various facets of the research context; thus, it is acknowledged that all aspects could not be grounded in the 'practice of the knower' (168). Nevertheless, as *theoria* 'is about proceeding from within an activity, making its "grammar" explicit, opening new possibilities for action, and informing mindful, caring and wise conduct' (Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011: 169), the deposition of a copy of this thesis within the BFI National Archive and provision of a feedback report (including the practical insights outlined in Appendix 4) may, indeed, prompt additional reflection within the organisation of study.

Overall, the underpinning of analysis in, as far as possible, the 'practice of the knower' augmented the iterative process and yielded rich findings and insights not only within the themes — *Safeguarding*, *Legitimising*, *Gatekeeping*, *Connecting*, and *Negotiating Boundaries* — but also facilitated and enhanced the consideration of the linkages and tensions between them. This thesis affirms Eikeland and Nicolini's avowal of the potential value of centring enquiry in the 'practice of the knower', and would further suggest that researchers attend, where appropriate, to the potential for incorporation of (aspects of) the 'practice of the knower' within their methodological framework.

2.4 - SITUATING THE LLGFF: THE BURGEONING FIELD OF FESTIVAL STUDIES

Scholars within the field of QFF studies suggest that LGBTQ-film festivals maintain a strong political and social activist connection (Loist & Zielinski, 2012; de Valck & Loist, 2009; Rastegar, 2009). Similarly, throughout this thesis, the LLGFF has been shown to be historically contingent, situated and conditioned by its responsiveness to the wider (political and social) concerns of minority sexualities. This is manifest in the way in which the LLGFF has adapted and changed over time. This continual augmentation reflects changes in discourses of equality, queer politics, community concerns and the evolving historical context of queer cinema and culture within which the festival operates. However, contrary to expectations derived from the literature, this study has also highlighted a *de-politicisation* of the festival since its inception in 1986. Several participants commented upon the 'institutional' and consequently non-radical feel of the LLGFF, which they often attribute to its anchoring in the BFI. Similarly, its community entanglements are primarily characterised by cultural, health and arts mandates rather than political ones.

Furthermore, although FFS literature emphasises the centrality of film industry to festivals (i.e. Rüling & Pederson [2010] do not even include the audience in their list of festival stakeholders), QFF studies instead position LGBTQ communities as the central stakeholder. Conversely, the LLGFF was far more industry-based than suggested by QFF studies. Concurrently, QFF studies do not currently adequately address the importance of QFF in facilitating and supporting the wider queer-film industry, and offering an organising and order-producing point of connection for queer filmmakers as suggested in this thesis.

In addition to the delineation in FFS of a general tension between aesthetic and commercial concerns (and QFF studies' demarcation of a tension between commercial and community priorities), this thesis has elicited an additional dimension that has not been commented upon within these fields. The three festival conceptualisations (A, B and C) traced by this study (outlined in sub-section 2.1 of Chapter IV) also point to the

LLGFF's 'professionalism' as an important aspect that contributes to the overall rich conceptualisation of the festival as a whole.

Moreover, consideration of this interlocking tripartite element also unveils further tensions (and interrelations) that serve to mould the festival within and across iterations. This thesis has explored how organisational (commercially-minded, professional), cultural, aesthetic and communi*ties*-centred practices intersect and how their simultaneous enactment at the LLGFF is negotiated. In places, it has also considered the manner in which the value, impact or relevance of these multifarious practice outcomes are considered, and the constantly re-negotiated balance of interests adjusted accordingly.

A further aspect as yet relatively unexplored within FFS but shown in this thesis to be significant is the role of festivals as archivers, revisers and presenters of collective community histories and memory. The role of the festival as a point of connection for and across LGBTQ communities has been explored throughout and was not an unexpected outcome of this study. However, the unveiling through a practice-lens of the construction of community space and inscribing of organisational (and public) space as community-centred or differentially structured (in terms of accepted norms) is a novel contribution of this research.

Furthermore, following from de Valck and Loist's (2009) and Rüling and Pederson's (2010) suggestion that further research is needed to explore the relationship between FF and the wider creative industries, this thesis has illuminated the *interrelationality* of practice through, for instance, those practices that have a secondary effect in contributing to the shaping of the queer film industry and queer cultural canon. This confirms Rastegar's 2012 assertion that festivals are influential in cultivating filmic tastes. Following from Brown's (2009) statement that the fledgling field of FFS would benefit from more case-studies, this thesis also contributes an in-depth case study to the field of FFS and, in answer to the diversifying call to examine the organisational dimensions of festivals (Loist, 2011; de Valck & Loist, 2009), offers an organisational perspective with cross-disciplinary relevance.

SUMMARY

In Chapter II this study presented a panorama of theories of practice and festival-based studies, offering a definition of practice that served as a productive launch pad from which to examine the phenomena of festivals, and through this to also re-consider theories of practice. The review of relevant literatures also identified a number of promising areas of study, many of which were explored through critical engagement with themes that emerged from the practices identified. Enhanced by the potential to generate *theoria*, the practices/themes presented and examined in this thesis not only illuminate and build upon some theoretical/practical aspects suggested by current literatures but also indicate novel and unexpected aspects and provide nuanced empirical examples that serve to enrich and enhance current understandings. Through the tracing of these themes, this project has identified a number of theoretical and practical insights of relevance to both practitioners and scholars of practice and festivals (and other intermittent organisational forms). Crucially, however, the main contribution of this thesis lies in its theoretical consideration of the *cementing* or *anchoring* mechanisms that contribute to overcoming ephemerality and periods of latency by ensuring a degree of continuity in intermittent, temporary or project-based organisations. The examination in this study of how such mechanisms are operationalised has yielded a processual model, developed through the framework of the practice-lens, which constitutes a productive preliminary description of how (intermittent and/or festival) organisational memory and communities are maintained and propagated. Ultimately, this model signals multifaceted processes through which organisations channel temporal continuity and, thus, transcend temporality and ephemerality and endure across intermittent enactments.

LIMITATIONS

The findings of this thesis and the contributions and insights that it provides are generated from an interesting, rich and nuanced research site. Crucially, this study does not claim to 'capture' the totality of the festival or to have presented all of the practices enacted during the festival. Furthermore, this thesis does not claim to present these practices, themes, findings, insights or contributions as necessarily indicative of all festivals or temporary organisations, nor to suggest their facile application to an alternative cultural site.

The contribution of this thesis is rooted in one particular organisational environment, in the UK, with principal data collection limited to one festival iteration. As practice is historically contingent, the findings of this thesis reflect the period in which this study was undertaken. Further research considering a different organisation (even broadly comparable ones, such as similar identity-based film festivals abroad) may reveal a different assortment of practices and elicit different emergent themes for further exploration as significant aspects of those organisations. Furthermore, in examining the enactment of the LLGFF, the role of the general paying audience was primarily drawn into this study through direct observation and capture of social-media interactions. Although determined to be beyond the scope of this project, future research may seek to also include interviews with a variety of audience members (i.e. members of the 'public' that have no additional formal or informal role with the festival or film industry).

Finally, the interpretative approach adopted in this study is inherently subjective. Thus, the undertaking of observation and iterative analysis is framed by personal identifications, understandings and experiences (Grbich, 2007: 8; see also Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) that shape not only what is discerned as significant but also the subsequent consideration and inclusion (or exclusion) of research findings and insights. However, the interpretivist approach is broadly aligned with the theoretical suppositions of practice theories as employed in this thesis. During both data collection and analysis attempts were consistently made to recognise the researcher's assumptions and to challenge these when appropriate. Furthermore, this project, preliminary research

findings and sections of both 'Chapter II: Literature Review' and 'Chapter IV: Findings' have been subject to consideration and academic review by scholars within the School of Management, through both formal presentation and review of written work. Nevertheless, in recognising the role of the researcher in constructing all aspects of research, this approach allows for the dislocation of the researcher as spectator and for the potential generation of insights informed by the researcher's immersion 'within and below' (Eikeland and Nicolini, 2011; de Laine, 2000: 16) and 'insider' status in relation to some aspects of the research context (see also Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013: 375).

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS

This sub-section briefly outlines some collected thoughts relating to conducting this research project, how the research experience affected the researcher, and, finally, reflections upon the research process more generally.

REFLECTIONS UPON THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

As with any research, this study was subject to a number of decisions regarding the research process that shaped the scope of the project and the manner in which data was collected and analysed. With the benefit of having conducted the fieldwork and data analysis, there are some aspects of this research that, if able to undertake the project again, it may have proved interesting to incorporate or explore further.

Based upon prior experience of the researcher at LLGFF 2011, individuals from across the festival were approached for interview. Whilst my experience was generally extremely positive, the hectic nature of the festival enactment and myriad commitments of most individuals did mean that some participants were, in the end, instead interviewed via telephone or Skype following the festival (and one potential filmmaker participant pulled out due to commitments at a subsequent festival). Although interviewees were drawn from across the LLGFF, it may have been profitable to approach a larger volume of potential participants on the presumption that some may subsequently become unavailable. Furthermore, in order to avoid losing the face-to-face contact of an interview conducted in person, I would now instead choose to remain in London for a few days following the festival rather than leaving for St Andrews at its close. Nevertheless, it is important to note that I was overwhelmed by the general desire and willingness of potential participants to meet with me to discuss the festival. I was also struck by the almost testimonial nature of their wish to convey to me its significance and continued importance (and also to have it recorded in some manner through my thesis) and their eagerness to put me in touch with other potential participants.

In a similar vein, inevitable elements of the research context resulted in difficulties relating to access; the announcement of the festival programme only weeks before the festival made it impossible to contact featured filmmakers in a timely fashion. This was further complicated by the difficulty, at times, of locating contact details for some film industry professionals. Furthermore, on reflection, data collected may have been augmented in some regards through further conversations with: additional facets of the BFI; audience members; and a wider variety of film industry delegates (i.e. I was able to draw upon the richness of the longevity of a film distributor's involvement with the festival but I did not interview a distributor with short-term involvement for comparison [although I did interview other industry figures with short-term involvement]).

With regards to the decisions made concerning research design and strategy, the researcher's personal identification with the LGBTQ community was not made explicit during the processes of participant recruitment. Given the widespread urge to ascertain whether such a connection existed (and the previously discussed emergent significance of this for participants), were I to undertake this research project again I believe it would be advantageous to find a way to convey this in an indirect manner during participant recruitment. Furthermore, it may have been fruitful to spend time 'working' at the festival in the capacity of a volunteer in order to maximise exposure to some aspects of the festival and potential informal interactions with a wide range of industry and festival-organising community members (although this may not have proved practical given the time commitments of observation and interviews throughout the festival). Finally, although not possible at the time, given the shock 2011 financial cuts it would have been fascinating to instead study the 2011 festival iteration as an organisation at 'point of crisis' or, to have directly conducted fieldwork at both the 'crisis' 2011 iteration and the 2012 iteration for comparison.

IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE UPON THE RESEARCHER

Conducting this research has, of course, affected me in a number of ways. I believe that this process has greatly developed my understanding of the processes underlying research but also, more generally, has enriched my understanding of and

relationship to my topic, field, and the LGBTQ community. Examining the cementing and anchoring mechanisms that contribute to continuity within the context of an organisation has prompted wider and deeper reflection upon such mechanisms within the context of other forms of organisation, communities (and their collective memories/histories/traditions, and their transmission) and also in wider society. I feel that such cementing/anchoring mechanisms are not always recognised yet they play a vital role and it may be fruitful to reflect upon this across a variety of organisations. Having undertaken this research and having engaged with the research of others from a variety of disciplines, this project has prompted me to reconsider my relationship with my wider field of research. In particular, I now have a more open conceptualisation of what may be considered as 'management research' and what constitutes the discipline of 'Management'.

This project has reinvigorated my curiosity regarding queer histories and, furthermore, the role of filmic/cultural artefacts and events in 'remembering' and educating within and across communities. More broadly, engaging with the communities that interpenetrate the LLGFF has renewed my passion for queer cinema (and its history) and my interest in festival, LGBTQ and other vulnerable communities. I have deepened my understanding of the multiplicity and variety of LGBTQ communities and, indeed, I perhaps have a more nuanced understanding of my own identity. Furthermore, reflecting upon community safeguarding and the role of 'remembering' has fostered a growing personal interest in becoming more involved in LGBTQ community history projects.

REFLECTIONS UPON RESEARCH

The research process has been enjoyable and also educational in a number of ways. Having conducted a somewhat interdisciplinary study, I have learned the value of considering different approaches, exploring different disciplines, and the contribution that they can offer. Interdisciplinary research involves its own particular challenges but it has also proved to be rewarding and productive. Having had the privilege of receiving feedback regarding this project (primarily from my supervisor, Prof. Hibbert, but also

from other academics from across the School), I recognise the importance of seeking the valuable input of others in order to challenge inherent assumptions and to continue to develop and enhance projects as far as is possible. Having reflected upon my own methodological framework, I also feel better able to appreciate the value of and problems associated with the methodologies or approaches employed by other researchers. The research process has also developed my capabilities as a researcher, sharpening my interview and analytical skills as well as highlighting to me areas for improvement.

The challenges of an intense and lonely period of fieldwork has taught me patience and an appreciation of the 'luxury' of being able to undertake extended fieldwork as a doctoral student. Nevertheless, the study of an intermittent organisation is somewhat time-sensitive. It is crucial to engage in thorough planning to ensure that contacts are generated and meetings, interviews and ethics approval are all attended to in a timely fashion in order to avoid missing out. Although extremely time consuming, I appreciate the benefits of transcribing one's own interviews as I found this, in fact, prompted ideas and contributed to early analysis. Similarly, having spent a great deal of time in analysing my data, I felt that I knew the primary material extremely well and I was very confident in the significance of the practices and thematic groups that I went on to identify and develop. Finally, the specific festival iteration studied during this research project was fascinating. However, given the complex physical, temporal, organisational, cultural and spatial interrelations that tugged at the edges of its enactment, I am keenly aware of the need to look beyond the immediate research context during both analysis and in generating contributions. Ultimately, I have found the research process extremely stimulating and this project has been educational, has prompted inwards reflection, has exposed me to new ideas and experiences, and has sparked further ideas for research projects.

POTENTIAL AVENUES FOR FUTURE ENQUIRY

Deducing and crafting the findings, insights and overarching contribution of this thesis has provided a fecund platform from which to consider a number of interesting and productive areas of potential future enquiry. Future studies (of the LLGFF, other festivals or of temporary organisations) could build upon this research and potentially corroborate, enhance and extend the findings presented herein. Furthermore, given the situated and contingent site-specific nature of practice, such studies could also present contrasting or 'dissonant' practices to those indicated here.

Following from this study, it would be productive for the field of practice-based studies in particular to trace the practices identified by this project through subsequent LLGFF iterations in order to illuminate their evolution or dissolution through succeeding re-enactments. Furthermore, given that data analysis yielded insight relating to the multifaceted 'presence' and accessibility of the festival as both physical and virtual (and the now prolific use of social media as a highly interactive medium of communication with festival audiences, stakeholders and beyond), it would be remiss not to explore the shifting experiential dynamics of the LLGFF and, indeed, chart the impact of the BFI's ever-increasing virtual interface.[179] Similarly, given the insights generated in relation to the LLGFF's relationship with its 'parent organisation', the BFI, it would be enlightening to explore similar relationships in other research contexts. In order to expand this fresh and novel approach and to augment and further develop the assortment of practices developed in this study, it would be appropriate to extend this research and conduct comparative studies at different festival sites, such as other (LGBTQ) arts festivals, different identity-based festivals and non-specialist festivals. FFS scholars have also suggested that it would be fruitful to consider the international 'festival circuit' or 'festival network' that envelops any individual festival, to complement and move beyond case-study approaches to FF (Rhyne, 2009: 9; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009: 1; Iordanova, 2009).

[179] Indeed, McGill queries the future relevance of physical attendance at (mainstream) film festivals (2011: 281) and Piper suggests that (television) audiences desire and value an increasingly interactive and 'live' experience (2011).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE RESEARCH SETTING

The below figures relate to the research setting — the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival — and the wider organisational/institutional context within which the festival takes place, the British Film Institute.

Figure 54: BFI location map

The below image is a map of the central London location of the BFI Southbank and was captured from the BFI website via the below link:

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/visitor_information>

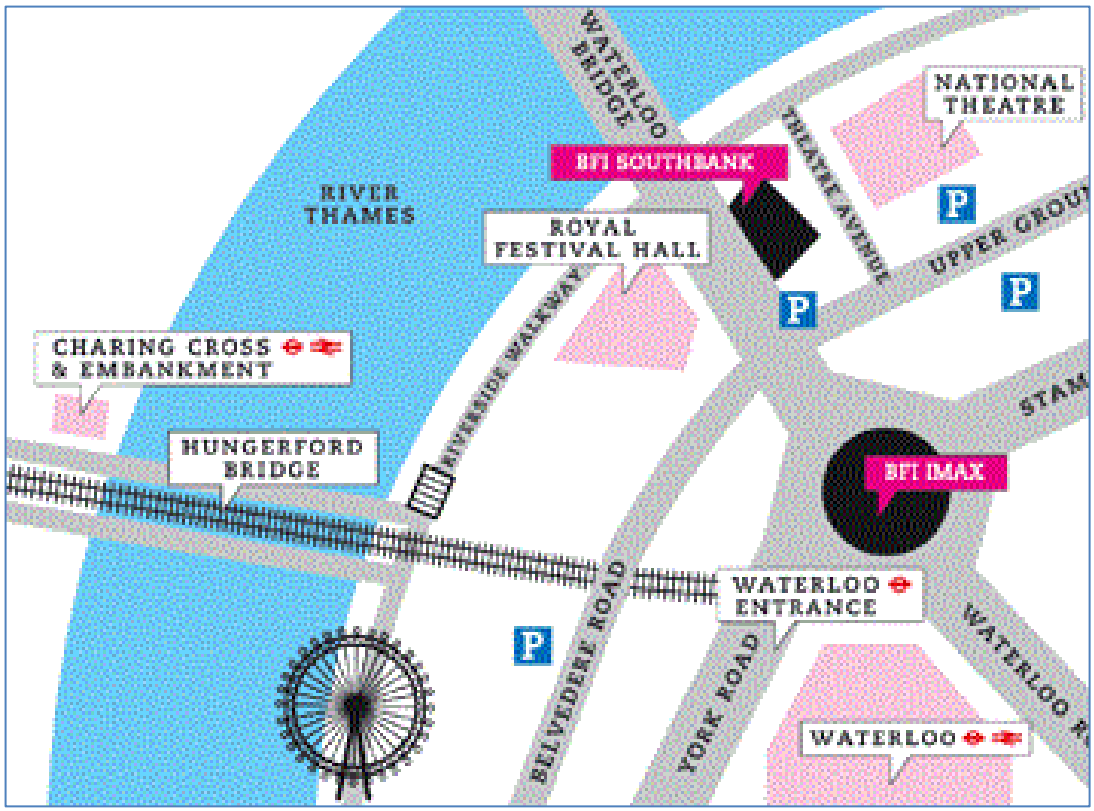
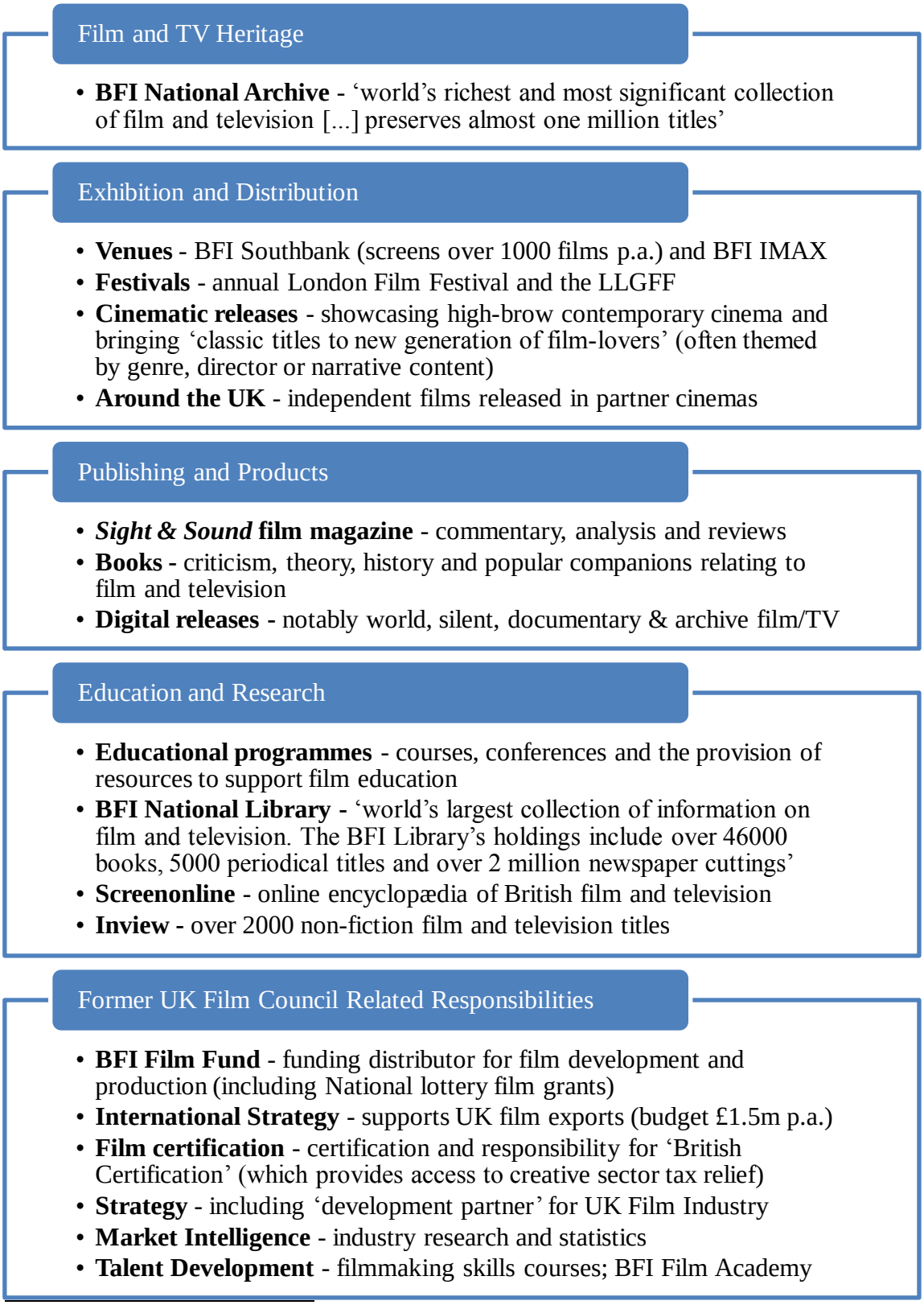


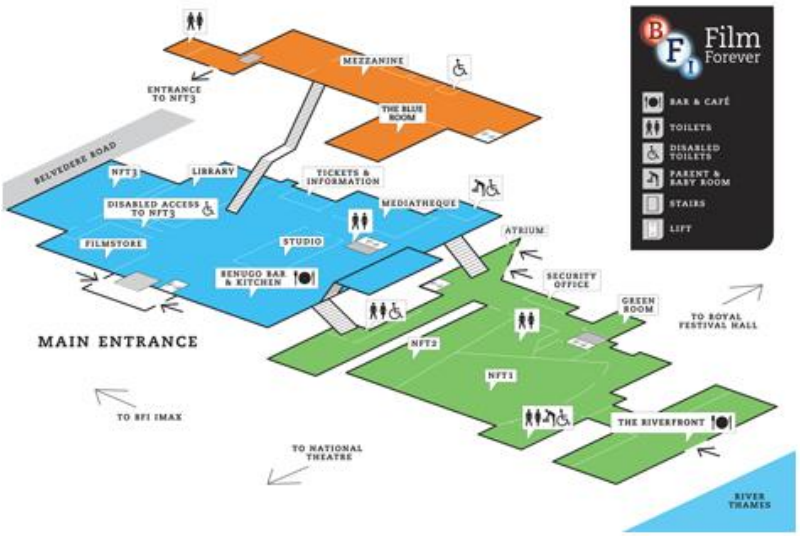
Figure 55: BFI activities and responsibilities (2012) [180]



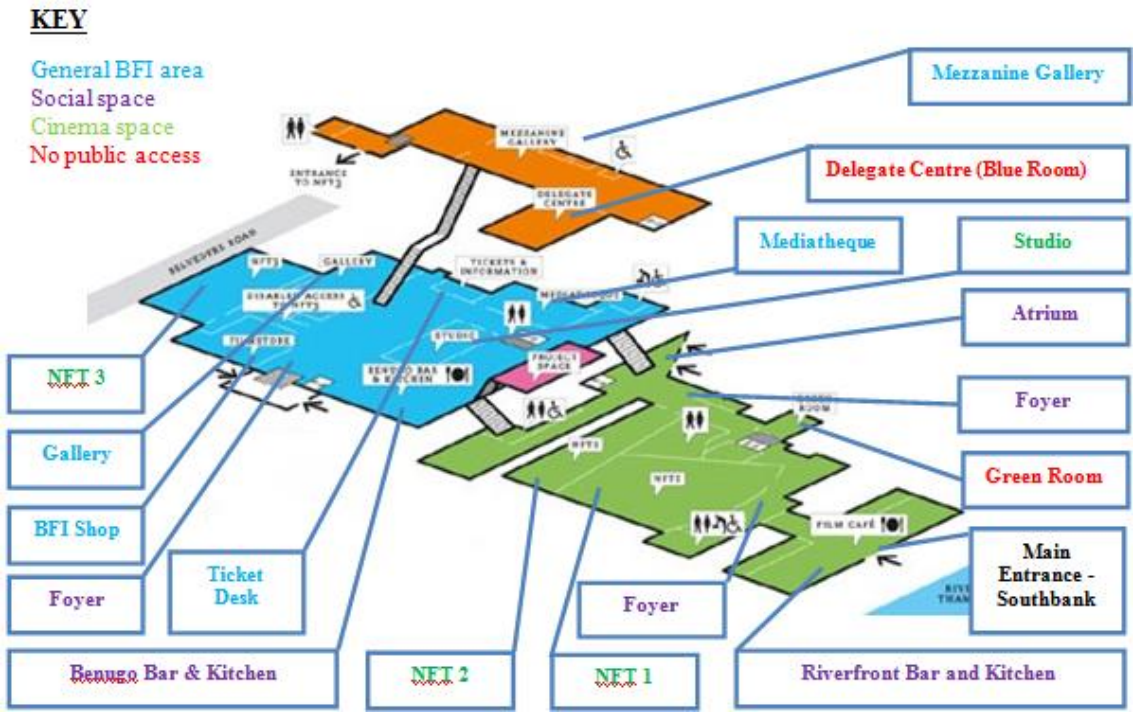
[180] Table compiled in February 2012 from the BFI's web pages, see <http://www.bfi.org.uk/about/whatwedo.html>.

Figure 56: BFI floor plan and amended LLGFF floor plan

This first image shows the BFI Southbank floor plan:[181]



A floor-plan image, taken from the BFI website, was amended by the researcher to indicate the differential uses of space during the LLGFF. The edited image is shown below:



[181] See <http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/visitor_information/general_information>.

Figure 57: Timeline of key LLGFF 2012 dates

The below timeline was compiled by the researcher and comprises a list of dates that were considered to be significant.

Key Dates		
2011	12th July	26th Festival announced
	16th Dec	Deadline for submissions
2012	9th Feb	Opening Night Gala film announced
	23rd Feb	**LLGFF Press Launch and programme unveiled**
	24th Feb	Competitions begin
	1st March	**Members' Priority Booking opens**
		Members' Ballot for Opening and Closing Night Gala opens
	6th March	Festival 'preview video trailer' posted online
	7th March	Members' Ballot results revealed
	8th March	**Public Booking opens [several films/events sold out]**
	20th March	Club Nights announced
	23rd March	**LLGFF begins with 'Opening Night Gala'**
	24th March	'Best of Fest' announced
	1st April	LLGFF ends with 'Closing Night Gala'

Figure 58: Main sponsors of LLGFF 2012

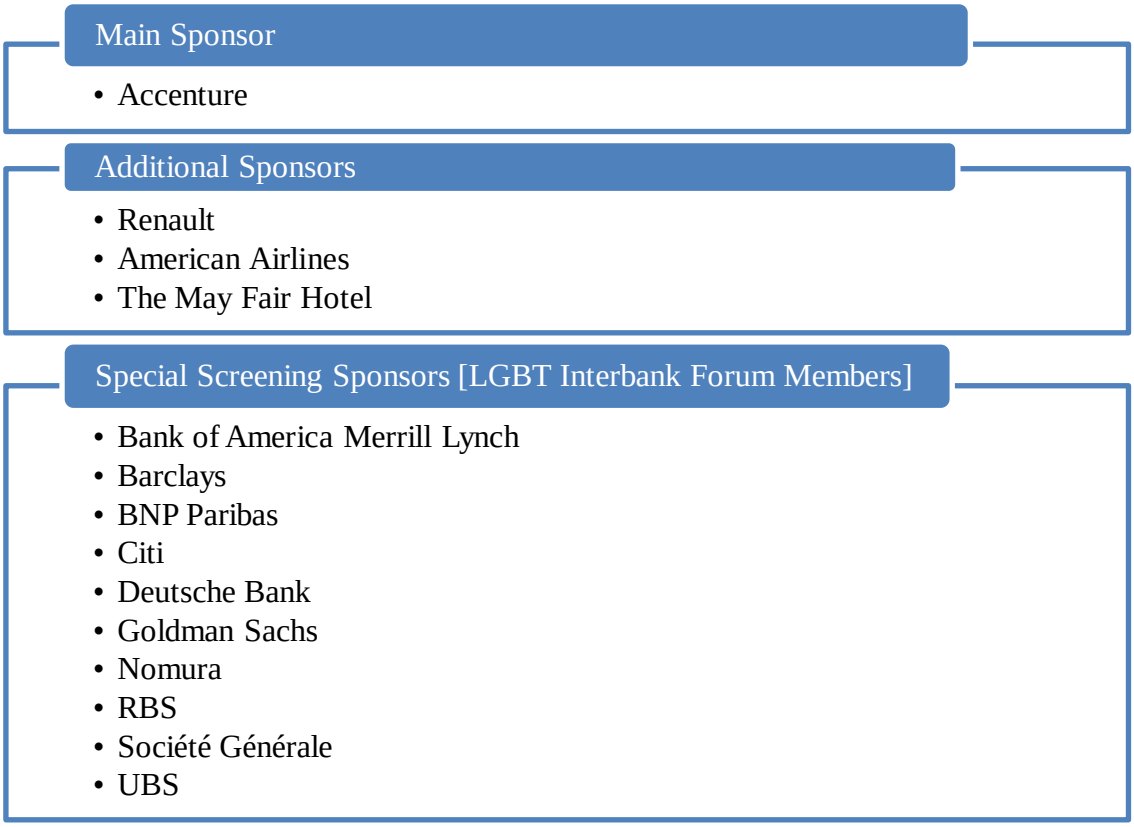


Figure 59: Partners, sponsors and supporters of LLGFF 2012

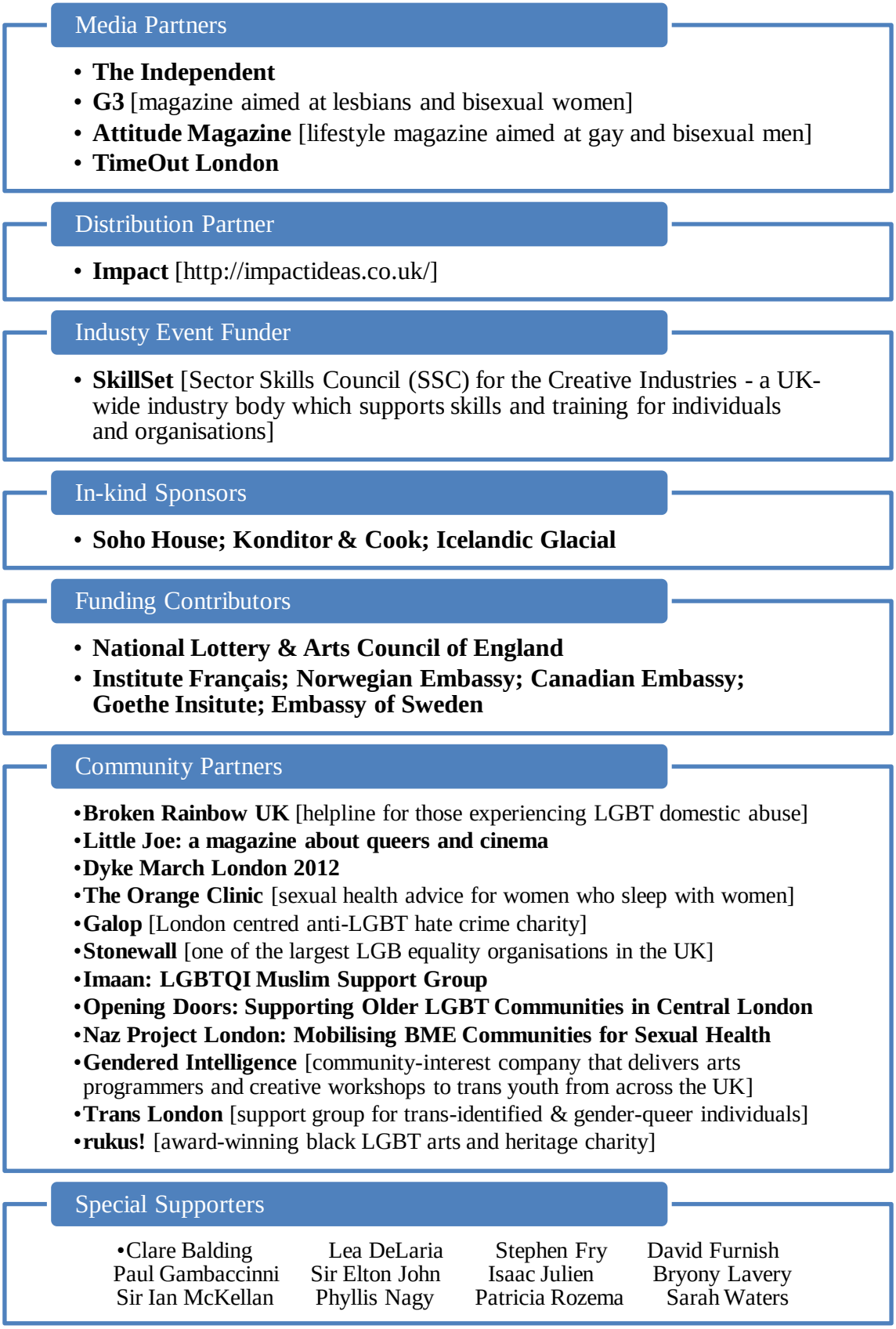


Figure 60: Full LLGFF 2012 film programme[182]

26th BFI LONDON
LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL
23 March – 1 April 2012

bfi.org.uk/llgff
Tickets 020 7928 3232

FRIDAY 23 MARCH OPENING NIGHT GALA CLOUDBURST 18:30 & 20:45 NFT1

SAT 24 MAR

NFT1

13:50 **Love Free or Die**
An intimate portrait of Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly gay and partnered bishop in Christendom.

15:50 **Kiss Me**
A beautifully told love story of what happens when one woman finally follows her heart.

18:20 **Vito**
An inspirational documentary exploring the man behind *The Celluloid Closet* who tirelessly fought for gay liberation during his lifetime.

20:30 **Leave It On The Floor**
A musical set to a pumping mix of hip hop, techno and house – like a super-charged edition of Glee.

NFT2

14:10 **Cloudburst**
On the road with two old broads, a superb comedy drama with Olympia Dukakis as you've never seen her before.

16:15 **Laughter Is So Sexy**
This delicious medley of assured comic turns features a wide range of film-making styles united by wit tempered with a sexual knowingness.

18:30 **Beauty**
An engaging documentary following a team of same-sex ballroom dancers as they prepare for competition.

20:40 **Difficult Love**
Screening with *Waited For*, these documentaries explore different aspects of the lesbian experience in South Africa.

NFT3

14:30 **Orchids, My Intersex Adventure**
A moving autobiographical documentary about a woman's journey to come to terms with her intersex condition.

16:10 **Mother Tongue**
After getting over the shock of her grown daughter's coming out, Estela hits the lesbian nightspots to find out more about Ruth's life.

18:10 **Transgender Representation - Are We Nearly There Yet?**
A panel discussion event debating and discussing the contemporary condition and future direction of transgender representation.

20:45 **Queen Christina**
Greta Garbo at her cross-dressing, deliciously Sapphic best.

STUDIO

13:00 **BFI Mediatheque Event**
Join BFI Mediatheque curator Simon McCallum for an illustrated lecture on some of the highlights of the Beautiful Things collection in the Mediatheque.

14:20 **Spartacus**
Kubrick's classic, with the suggestive bath scene between Olivier's Crassus and Tony Curtis as slave Antonius restored from where it was cut in the 1960 original.

18:40 **I Am**
Documentary exploring the lives of LGBT people in modern India as the law changes to decriminalise homosexuality.

SUN 25 MAR

NFT1

14:20 **The Perfect Family**
A mother and daughter struggle to accept each other in this funny and poignant all-star family drama.

16:20 **I Don't Know What To Say**
Adventures and heartbreaks await a group of adolescents as they look for different ways to communicate their feelings, either through talk or through action.

18:20 **Hit So Hard**
Compelling documentary about the life of Patty Schemel, drummer of the rock band Hole.

20:45 **Beauty**
Winner of the Queer Palm at Cannes 2011, a disturbing and provocative examination of one man's damaging self-hatred.

NFT2

13:30 **Yes or No?**
Disarmingly sweet tale of two Thai students who must decide whether they are brave enough to live lesbian lives.

16:15 **Domestic Revolutions**
A rich mix of mostly diasporic stories taking in comedy, coming of age, romance, period drama, animation and documentary.

18:30 **Our Future**
A pivotal summer in the life of a trans teenager growing up in rural Japan.

20:30 **Mother Tongue**
After getting over the shock of her grown daughter's coming out, Estela hits the lesbian nightspots to find out more about Ruth's life.

NFT3

13:00 **Spartacus**
Kubrick's classic, with the suggestive bath scene between Olivier's Crassus and Tony Curtis as slave Antonius restored from where it was cut in the 1960 original.

16:30 **Potiche**
A bored housewife takes on the family business in François Ozon's exuberant comic delight.

18:40 **Vito**
An inspirational documentary exploring the man behind *The Celluloid Closet* who tirelessly fought for gay liberation during his lifetime.

20:40 **Girl or Boy, My Sex Is Not My Gender**
An entertaining documentary about four transguys reinventing and questioning the border between man and woman.

STUDIO

14:10 **This Is What Love In Action Looks Like**
A passionate documentary chronicling one of the most controversial cases in recent gay history.

16:00 **Leave It On The Floor**
A musical set to a pumping mix of hip hop, techno and house – like a super-charged edition of Glee.

18:50 **Ballroom Rules**
An engaging documentary following a team of same-sex ballroom dancers as they prepare for competition.

20:50 **Kiss Me**
A beautifully told love story of what happens when one woman finally follows her heart.

MON 26 MAR

NFT1

14:00 **Pariah**
Powerful coming of age story about an African American lesbian living in Brooklyn.

18:20 **American Translation**
A young woman discovers her boyfriend is a psycho-sexual killer with a fondness for handsome rent boys.

20:45 **The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye**
A quirkily beautiful documentary about an extraordinary partnership.

NFT2

16:00 **Ballroom Rules**
An engaging documentary following a team of same-sex ballroom dancers as they prepare for competition.

18:30 **I Am**
Documentary exploring the lives of LGBT people in modern India as the law changes to decriminalise homosexuality.

20:30 **Our Paradise**
A tale of love, sex and violence between two Parisian rent boys.

NFT3

18:10 **This is Not a Dream**
An engaging documentary exploring the relationship between video technology and queer access to the moving image.

20:40 **Radical Constitution**
From Oscar Wilde to X-Ray Spex, this collection of experimental shorts showcases the best in contemporary queer artist's film and video work.

STUDIO

18:40 **Our Future**
A pivotal summer in the life of a trans teenager growing up in rural Japan.

20:50 **Mother Tongue**
After getting over the shock of her grown daughter's coming out, Estela hits the lesbian nightspots to find out more about Ruth's life.

TUE 27 MAR

NFT1

14:00 **Our Paradise**
A tale of love, sex and violence between two Parisian rent boys.

18:30 **Pariah**
Powerful coming of age story about an African American lesbian living in Brooklyn.

20:45 **Circumstance**
Two young women fall in love while exploring the sub-cultural underground party scene in Tehran.

NFT2

16:00 **Hit So Hard**
Compelling documentary about the life of Patty Schemel, drummer of the rock band Hole.

18:20 **Revealing Mr Maugham**
An insightful documentary on the life and loves of one of the 20th century's greatest writers.

20:40 **Laughter Is So Sexy**
This delicious medley of assured comic turns features a wide range of film-making styles united by wit tempered with a sexual knowingness.

NFT3

18:10 **Orchids, My Intersex Adventure**
A moving autobiographical documentary about a woman's journey to come to terms with her intersex condition.

20:30 **Selected Works of Ruth Novaczek**
A collection of films from experimental artist Ruth Novaczek.

STUDIO

18:00 **This is Not a Dream**
An engaging documentary exploring the relationship between video technology and queer access to the moving image.

20:50 **Girl or Boy, My Sex Is Not My Gender**
An entertaining documentary about four transguys reinventing and questioning the border between man and woman.

WED 28 MAR

NFT1

16:00 **The Perfect Family**
A mother and daughter struggle to accept each other in this funny and poignant all-star family drama.

18:30 **The Green**
A teacher has his life turned upside down when a student files a sexual allegation against him.

20:45 **Absent**
A schoolboy develops a crush on his teacher in this original and unconventional thriller.

NFT2

13:30 **Yes or No?**
Disarmingly sweet tale of two Thai students who must decide whether they are brave enough to live lesbian lives.

18:20 **Speechless**
The past comes back to haunt a mysterious young man found by a river in a small town in China in this assured thriller.

20:40 **Morocco**
Marlene Dietrich in a tux at her most sensual and evocative best in von Sternberg's steamy tale of love in a foreign climate.

NFT3

18:10 **A Place of Rage**
Classic documentary about the role of black women in the American civil rights movement – with Angela Davis, June Jordan and Alice Walker.

20:30 **365 Without 377**
Screening with *More Than a Friend*, these two documentaries consider what it means to be LGBT in contemporary India.

STUDIO

18:40 **Vito**
An inspirational documentary exploring the man behind *The Celluloid Closet* who tirelessly fought for gay liberation during his lifetime.

20:50 **Sexing the Transman**
An explicit exploration of transmale sexuality.

[182] Image from 'BFI Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Calendar' PDF, see <http://www.bfi.org.uk/llgff/>.

THU 29 MAR

NFT1

14:00 **Absent**
A schoolboy develops a crush on his teacher in this original and unconventional thriller.

18:20 **Jobriath A.D.**
A hymn to the enigmatic, cult glam rocker Jobriath, 'I am the true fairy of rock'.

20:45 **Alice Walker: Beauty In Truth**
Exclusive preview of excerpts from this upcoming documentary about 'The Color Purple' author Alice Walker, plus extended interview with director Pratibha Parmar.

NFT2

15:50 **Kiss Me**
A beautifully told love story of what happens when one woman finally follows her heart.

18:30 **Sexing the Transman**
An explicit exploration of transmale sexuality.

20:40 **A Safe Place for the Wild**
A trio of short films about love, sex and relationships and what happens when the boundaries between them become blurred.

NFT3

18:10 **This Is What Love In Action Looks Like**
A passionate documentary chronicling one of the most controversial cases in recent gay history.

20:30 **Making Love**
The groundbreaking 1982 gay classic with a special introduction.

STUDIO

14:00 **Now We Are Here (Filmmakers' Workshop)**
A Skillset-supported event assessing how far LGBT filmmakers have come and what still needs to be done.

18:40 **The Green**
A teacher has his life turned upside down when a student files a sexual allegation against him.

20:50 **Revealing Mr Maugham**
An insightful documentary on the life and loves of one of the 20th century's greatest writers.

FRI 30 MAR

NFT1

16:00 **The Mountain**
An emotional drama set in stunningly beautiful scenery.

18:30 **Gun Hill Road**
Ex-con returns home from prison to find his son is becoming a woman.

NFT2

14:00 **Jobriath A.D.**
A hymn to the enigmatic, cult glam rocker Jobriath, 'I am the true fairy of rock'.

18:20 **Fragments: The Incomplete Films of Peter de Rome**
A fascinating look at the life and work of legendary gay porn pioneer Peter de Rome.

20:40 **Sexing the Transman**
An explicit exploration of transmale sexuality.

NFT3

18:10 **Joe + Belle**
Girl meets girl but not as we've seen it before.

20:30 **Because We're Worth It**
From transmen becoming 50 foot monsters and stomping through the suburbs to a genderqueer Orphan Annie performing in a matchbox, these shorts are all about empowerment.

STUDIO

18:40 **Jitters**
A sensitive portrait of a group of teenage friends in Iceland.

20:50 **Speechless**
The past comes back to haunt a mysterious young man found by a river in a small town in China in this assured thriller.

SAT 31 MAR

NFT1

13:50 **Weekend**
Another chance to see Andrew Haigh's highly-acclaimed modern gay classic.

16:15 **Jitters**
A sensitive portrait of a group of teenage friends in Iceland.

18:30 **Life's Too Short...**
Tattooed cowgirls, love-struck bunnies, and an homage to 1950s sci-fi films. If it's lesbian love and laughs you're after we've got it right here.

20:45 **The Skinny**
The third feature from Patrik-Ian Polk follows four young, black, gay men and their lesbian friend as they reunite a year after university.

NFT2

14:00 **Gun Hill Road**
Ex-con returns home from prison to find his son is becoming a woman.

16:00 **The Mountain**
An emotional drama set in stunningly beautiful scenery.

20:40 **Joe + Belle**
Girl meets girl but not as we've seen it before.

NFT3

13:30 **Suddenly, Last Summer**
A big screen classic with a stellar cast and one of the first Hollywood films to obviously, if hardly positively, depict male homosexuality.

15:50 **Families Like Ours**
A lively selection of films looking at the experiences of parents, pupils and teachers.

18:20 **Speechless**
The past comes back to haunt a mysterious young man found by a river in a small town in China in this assured thriller.

20:30 **Mommy Is Coming**
Sex, feminists and videotape... in Berlin. A documentary about queer porn from Marit Östberg and Cheryl Dunye's farcical Freudian romp.

STUDIO

13:00 **BFI Mediatheque Event**
Join BFI Mediatheque curator Simon McCallum for an illustrated lecture on some of the highlights of the Beautiful Things collection in the Mediatheque.

14:20 **Future Film Programme**
Future Film has once again teamed up with LLGFF with a great opportunity for young filmmakers and writers.

16:20 **Jobriath A.D.**
A hymn to the enigmatic, cult glam rocker Jobriath, 'I am the true fairy of rock'.

18:40 **365 Without 377**
Screening with *More Than a Friend*, these two documentaries consider what it means to be LGBT in contemporary India.

20:50 **Difficult Love**
Screening with *Waited For*, these documentaries explore different aspects of the lesbian experience in South Africa.

SUN 1 APR

NFT1

13:30 **The Green**
A teacher has his life turned upside down when a student files a sexual allegation against him.

15:30 **Wish Me Away**
Country music star Chely Wright's brave coming out journey is beautifully chronicled in this excellent documentary.

18:30 **Closing Night: North Sea Texas**
An assured and beautiful story about the passionate longing of adolescence.

20:45 **Closing Night: North Sea Texas**
An assured and beautiful story about the passionate longing of adolescence.

NFT2

13:50 **The Skinny**
The third feature from Patrik-Ian Polk follows four young, black, gay men and their lesbian friend as they reunite a year after university.

16:00 **Because We're Worth It**
From transmen becoming 50 foot monsters and stomping through the suburbs to a genderqueer Orphan Annie performing in a matchbox, these shorts are all about empowerment.

18:10 **Best of Fest**
20:40 **Best of Fest**

NFT3

13:00 **Bol**
Beautiful but harrowing film about the lot of women and intersex people in Pakistan.

16:20 **A Safe Place for the Wild**
A trio of films about love, sex and relationships and what happens when the boundaries between them become blurred.

18:20 **Life's Too Short...**
Tattooed cowgirls, love-struck bunnies, and an homage to 1950s sci-fi films. If it's lesbian love and laughs you're after we've got it right here.

20:30 **American Translation**
A young woman discovers her boyfriend is a psycho-sexual killer with a fondness for handsome rent boys.

STUDIO

14:00 **This Is What Love In Action Looks Like**
A passionate documentary chronicling one of the most controversial cases in recent gay history.

16:10 **Jitters**
A sensitive portrait of a group of teenage friends in Iceland.

18:40 **Best of Fest**
20:50 **Best of Fest**

All films not in the English language will be subtitled.

*Check **bfi.org.uk/llgff** for details or subscribe to our email bulletin online.

SUNDAY 1 APRIL CLOSING NIGHT GALA NORTH SEA TEXAS 18:30 & 20:45 NFT1

APPENDIX 2: FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS

The below figures relate to the fieldwork and analysis undertaken as part of this research project.

Figure 61: Interview guide

This interview guide has been included to suggest a flavour of the interviews undertaken as part of this research project, rather than as a representation of the conversations that took place. Interviews were conversational in nature but with the below questions/topics in mind and most areas/topics/themes were covered in each interview, aside from role-specific questions (i.e. for the programmers). The below questions are themed here for clarity but were not presented in the interview as such.

Interview guide

Introductory questions:
 	
- What is your favourite film in the festival this year?
- How did you come to be involved in the festival?
  o Why did you want to get involved?
  o What were your motivations for getting involved?

Activities at the festival: - Tell me about what you do/did in an average day/shift during the festival. - Tell me about what you did in the months leading up to the festival itself. - Can you tell me a bit more about what you do on a day-to-day basis? - What does your job/role generally entail? - During the festival, describe a typical day for you. - Can you tell me about your first day/time being involved with the festival? - How has your role changed over time? [If involved for more than one year] - Do you have a role in training newcomers or up-and-coming individuals?

- What was the impact of last year's cuts?
    - On your role?
    - On the festival?
    - [programmers] On the programme? Were certain elements of the festival prioritised?
- How do you think/feel your role contributes to the festival as a whole?
- Tell me about the events and activities that run parallel to the films during the festival.
- What was your involvement with / experience of film (and queer film) before getting involved?

Thoughts & feelings:

- How did you feel about last year's cuts?
    - [non-programmers] Did you feel that there was a shift/change in the atmosphere/priorities?
- How do you think the festival has changed over time?
- Tell me about the festival programme.
- The festival has a lot of different elements to it. Which do you feel are the most important? / What do you feel is the core essence of the festival?
- Do you have a particular interest in queer cinemas?
- How do people tend to get involved with the festival?
    - Is it common for former volunteers to go on to a more prominent role with the festival? Is that a common trajectory?
- What sorts of people do you think come to the LLGFF?
    - Would they come to the BFI normally?
    - Are they a similar audience to that of the 'Fringe!' Film Festival?
- Do you think there is a tension sometimes around labelling a film as a 'gay film'?
- [filmmakers] How do you feel about your work being labelled as queer?
    - How do you feel about being labelled as a queer filmmaker?

For programmers/former programmers:

- How do you decide which films to include?
- What are you looking for in a film? / What are the most important elements to a film?
- How do you access material?
    - Are most of the films you consider from open submissions or material

that you have requested after viewing at another festival or hearing good reviews?

- How are your decisions guided?
- To what extent do you, or are you able to, follow your own interests?
- Do you have quite a free rein when choosing what to include?
- Have you ever been told not to include something [by the BFI or Senior Programmer]?
- How do you put together the programme as a whole? / What is the process for shaping the group's film choices into a coherent programme?
    - How do you choose the 'theme' for the festival each year?
- Do you have specific individual roles or responsibilities for programming (i.e. trans, intersex, art-house, experimental, shorts etc.)?
- Is there a desire/pressure to 'represent' different elements of the queer community?
- Are there particular narratives that you seek to avoid or promote?
- Tell me about how you balance aesthetic choices against other priorities
    - Is there a pressure for the festival to be 'commercially viable'?
    - How aware are you during the programming phase of the need to fill the theatres?
    - Do you ever feel aware of the need to fill up the cinemas and of how a film will perform in that regard?
- Who are the 'audience'?

For volunteers/volunteers coordinator:

- Why do you think people volunteer to be involved in the festival?
- Why did you want to volunteer?
- What was the recruitment/selection procedure like?
- What sort of qualities do you look for in a volunteer?
- Tell me about what the volunteers do / you do as a volunteer.
- Tell me about how what the volunteers do fits into the festival as a whole.

For film industry:

- How important is the LLGFF?
- How important is the LLGFF for the queer-film industry?
- What is the place of the LLGFF in the queer-film industry?
- What is the relationship between the festival and your organisation?
- Tell me about how you interact with the festival team throughout the year?

- Tell me about a typical day for you during the festival.
- Are a lot of distribution deals done during the festival?
- Tell me about the Delegate Centre. How important is it?[183]

The festival communities:

- What role does the festival play in the LGBT cultural calendar?
    - Do you think/feel that this has changed over time?
- Do you think the festival is important to LGBT and queer communities? Why?
- How important is this festival for queer filmmakers?
- Do you think LGBT and queer cinema is important? Why?
- Do we still need a queer/LGBT film festival? / What do you think about arguments that we don't need an LGBT-specific film festival anymore?
    - For LGBTQ communities
    - How important do you think having a dedicated LGBT and queer festival is for queer filmmakers?
    - Do you think that the role of the festival for filmmakers and also for communities has changed over time?
- Do you think the festival taking place in the BFI has any wider meaning? / Do you think it is significant that the LLGFF is held here as opposed to a more LGBTQ-community sort of space?
- What do you think about the biggest queer cinema festival in the UK being run by the BFI (as opposed to a queer community group as in many other countries)?
- Are you aware of the 'Fringe!' film festival?
    - How do you feel that the two festivals sit alongside each other?

Closing questions:

- Tell me about a time during your involvement that you found particularly significant personally.
- Do you have any favourite anecdotes from your involvement?
- What have you found most rewarding about your time being involved with the festival?
- Is there anything about the festival that I've not asked you about/that we've not talked about that you would like to mention?

[183] During 2011 there was no Delegate Centre following massive cuts to the festival funding by the BFI. It was reinstated for the 2012 festival.

Figure 62: Table indicating types of data collected for this study

Data Type	Details
Interviews	**21 Interactions with interviewees** • **15 Formal interviews, audio-recorded and transcribed** ○ ranging in length from 30 to 70 minutes (the majority of which were around 40-45 minutes in duration) ○ 11 conducted in person ○ 3 conducted via telephone ○ 1 conducted via Skype • **6 Informal/unplanned conversations with interviewees** ○ ranging in length from 5 to 10 minutes ○ recorded in field-diary
Observation	**80 hours (approximately) of observation during the 26th LLGFF, from Friday 23 March 2012 to Sunday 1 April 2012.** Observation took place in various spaces within the Southbank and included attendance at and observation of 32 films and events, listed below.[184] • **17 Films** **(including official introductions and Q&A sessions)** [185] ○ 1 Archive films ○ 2 'Best of the Year' films ○ 4 Documentary films ○ 9 Feature films ○ 1 Gala film • **15 Events** ○ ***Attendance and observation:*** ○ 1 BFI event (BFI *Mediatheque* event) ○ 2 Community networking events (trans filmmaking and Southbank Surfing) ○ 6 Festival club nights (public) ○ 2 LLGFF club nights (closed)

[184] More detail regarding the specific films and events attended can be found in Figure 63, Appendix 2.
[185] These were recorded as accurately as possible in the field diary. In some cases, an audio-visual recording of the Q&A session was available on the BFI website and, if available, this was consulted during the transcription of the research diary.

- 1 Panel discussion event (trans representation)

Observation only:

- 1 Community arts event (Cruising for Art)
- 1 Community group demonstration (Pink Dancers)
- 1 Political community demonstration (Dyke March)

- **Areas observed**

  - ***Atrium***
    Private parties and networking events were held here but the area is clearly visible from one of the foyer areas, separated only by a rope. Also, one interview took place here.
  - ***BFI Benugo Bar & Kitchen***
    This space primarily operated as a café during the day and as a bar at night. The open-plan nature of this space and its location within the BFI meant that it was an ideal space from which to observe several areas of the building. During the day several informal meetings took place here between industry figures. Similarly, this was a popular social space for groups of festival attendees (and community members that may not have attended a film/event but visited for the atmosphere). During the day I often used this space to also reflect and write-up entries in my field-diary.
  - ***BFI shop***
    The shop had tailored and specialist displays during the festival, including more prominent product-placement of LGBTQ-interest films, critical and popular-interest queer-cinema literature and LLGFF merchandise available for purchase (i.e. T-shirts).
  - ***Delegate Centre / Blue Room***
    Limited access meant that observation was limited to during the interviews that took place here and the two closed LLGFF Club Nights mentioned below. However, those arriving and departing were clearly visible from the below foyer, the Mezzanine and some areas of the 'Benugo Bar & Kitchen'.
  - ***Foyers***
    Observation included: crowds gathering prior to and following screenings; LLGFF-specific adaptations to the BFI (such as temporary provision of gender-neutral toilets); marketing materials throughout the building (posters, TV screens showing trailers and displaying 'tweets').
  - ***Green Room***
    No public access meant that observation was limited to observing [ushered] individuals coming and going from the foyer.
  - ***Main entrance, 'Riverfront Bar & Kitchen'***
    This included the immediate vicinity of the Southbank (i.e.

	during Dyke March). ○ ***Mediatheque*** I spent an hour using the Mediatheque. However, as it has a glass wall, this area is very visible at all times. ○ ***Ticket-desk area and surrounding foyer*** This area was a popular 'meeting point', some events were held here (i.e. the Pink Dancers demonstration) and individuals hoping to purchase 'returns' queued here.
Documents & Artefacts	**Documents, articles, web pages, e-mails and press releases were collated over a period from 1 March 2011 to 30 April 2012.** These have, where they contained relevant information, been included in the analysis, either as part of the fieldwork diary (i.e. programme notes) or coded as a separate entity. • **Extensive website monitoring (over the 14 month period described above)** ○ BFI website ○ LLGFF website • **Official LLGFF media and documents** ○ 60 (approx.) BFI Member weekly 'news' e-mails ○ 38 page LLGFF print programme (for comparison, the 2011 and 2013 programmes were also consulted) ○ 32 printed pages of LLGFF 'programme notes' relating to individual films (provided at festival) ○ LLGFF physical marketing materials (included in BFI Member monthly postal delivery[186] and distributed at the LLGFF itself) ○ 15 LLGFF e-mail press releases ○ LLGFF stream of BFI live (online audio-visual material) • **Other festival and community websites / social-networking accounts monitored** ○ LLGFF Facebook account ○ BFI Facebook and Twitter accounts ○ 'Fringe!' (queer-film festival) website and Facebook and Twitter accounts ○ 'Diva' (magazine) Twitter account and website ○ 'The Most Cake' Twitter account and website ○ 'Peccadillo Pictures' (LGBT film distributor) Twitter account and website ○ Pink News website (online queer community news website) • **Community media** ○ 13 'monthly' print issues of DIVA magazine

[186] The BFI sends members a 'What's On' calendar each month as well as a comprehensive booklet detailing screenings, events, BFI activities, seasons and upcoming seasons/festivals.

- 4 print issues of g3 (free magazine available in LGBT venues)
- 50 (approx.) Peccadillo Pictures weekly ‘mailing-list’ e-mails
- ‘HomoLAB 39’ (queer cultural news podcast featuring an interview with some of the LLGFF 2012 programming team) on GayStarNews website

- **News Reports**
  - 1 Channel 4 news report regarding LLGFF 2012 (including interview with Senior Programmer)

Figure 63: List of films and events attended during fieldwork

Feature Films

- *Beauty / Skoonheid* (Dir: Hermanus; South Africa-France, 2011)
- *Circumstance* (Dir: Keshavarz; USA-Iran-Lebanon, 2011)
- *Jitters / Órói* (Dir: Baldvin Z; Iceland, 2010)
- *Mommy is Coming* (Dir: Dunye; Germany-USA, 2012)
- *Pariah* (Dir: Rees; USA, 2011)
- *Potiche* (Dir: Ozon; France, 2010)
- *Stud Life* (Dir: Campbell X; UK, 2012)
- *The Perfect Family* (Dir: Renton; USA, 2011)
- *Weekend* (Dir: Haigh; UK, 2011)
- *Yes or No?* (Dir: Wongsomphet; Thailand, 2010)

Other Films (i.e. documentaries, archive etc.)

- *Alice Walker: Beauty and Truth : work-in-progress and Q&A* (Dir: Parmar; USA-UK, 2011)
- *Jobriath A.D.* (Dir: Turner; USA, 2011)
- *Love Free or Die* (Dir: Alston; USA, 2010)
- *Queen Christina* (Dir: Mamoulian; USA, 1933)
- *Sisterhood* (Dir: Östberg; Germany, 2012)
- *Vito* (Dir: Schwarz; USA, 2011)
- *Wish Me Away* (Dir: Birleffi & Kopf; USA, 2011)

Festival Club Nights

- 23/03/12 - Around the World In 80 Tunes with Club Kali @LLGFF
- 24/03/12 - Kan Chi and Lin Sangster (AKA the Librarian) @LLGFF
- 29/03/12 - Shake Yer Dix @LLGFF
- 30/03/12 - Precious Brown Vs. The Sewing Circle
- 31/03/12 - Bad Reputation @LLGFF
- 01/04/12 - DJ Dogtits @LLGFF [a resident DJ for the (now defunct) London lesbian venue *Candy Bar*]

Other Events

- Pink Dancers Demonstration [lesbian and gay ballroom dance group]
- BFI Mediatheque Event [illustrated lecture]
- Crusing For Art [interactive performance-art piece]
- Dyke March London [march for queer women and allies through Central London to the Southbank - researcher attended Southbank only]
- 'Transgender Representation: Are We Nearly There Yet?' [panel discussion]
- 'Transgender Representation' post-panel networking event
- Two LLGFF 'Blue Room' club nights (closed)
- Southbank Surfing [post Dyke March social, usually a monthly event]

Figure 64: Volunteer 'job advertisement'

The below advertisement was copied from the BFI website via the following link: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/about/jobs/details/llgff2012>

Volunteer at the BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival

- **Salary:** Lunch and travel expenses reimbursed
- **Location:** London

The 26th BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival
Starting 23 March to 1 April 2012

The Festival team at the BFI are currently looking for enthusiastic, efficient, and self-motivated volunteers to provide support during the 23rd [sic] London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival from **23 March to 1 April 2012**.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who is passionate about LGBT culture in general and lesbian and gay film. You will be assisting in the running of the Delegate Centre, Festival Hospitality, and many other activities.

The BFI will reimburse expenses up to £12 per day, at the end of the Film Festival.

If you are interested in volunteering, please send your Volunteer Application Form, along with a covering letter describing your interest in the LLGFF, by email titled 'Volunteering at LLGFF' to festivalrecruitment@bfi.org.uk. The deadline for all applications is 5 March 2012.

We support diversity and inclusion.

Figure 65: Volunteer application form

In particular, please see pages two and three of the below document.

BFI

Awards for All
The National Lottery®

VOLUNTEER WORKER APPLICATION FORM

Please refer to the guidance notes before completing this form.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Last Name: | Forename(s):

Address:

Postcode:

Home Tel:
Mobile:
Email:

AVAILABILITY

Length of time (please circle)	Up to 1 month	Up to 3 months	Up to 6 months	Up to 12 months	More than 1 year

Day(s) per week (please circle)	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Dates available: From | To

Hours per day (approx)

Total hours per week (approx)

1

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

Institute	Examination & subjects taken	Result/Grade/Date

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please enter below any knowledge, skills, experience and interests that might be helpful in support of your application.

2

WHY ARE YOU APPLYING FOR VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE BFI?

WHICH AREAS OF THE BFI YOU ARE INTERESTED IN AND WHY?

REFERENCES

Please give the names and addresses of two people whom we can contact for a reference.

Reference 1		Reference 2	
Name:		Name:	
Position:		Position:	
Organisation:		Organisation:	
Address:		Address:	
Postcode		Postcode	
Telephone No:		Telephone No:	
E-mail:		E-mail:	
In what capacity do you know this person:		In what capacity do you know this person:	

DECLARATION

I can confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided on this form is correct and gives a fair representation of my qualifications and employment history and that if it is subsequently discovered that I have wilfully or negligently given false information or withheld information. I will be liable to immediate dismissal and may be prosecuted

Signed: Date:

Completed application forms must be emailed to: jobs@bfi.org.uk

Figure 66: List of codes used in analysis

The below table lists the codes utilised in analysis. Additional clarification is provided, in places, within italicised square brackets. Where these codes appear in the tables contained in 'Chapter IV: Findings', they are generally listed without additional explanation for reasons of space (unless deemed necessary for clarity).

Analytical Codes	
1.	**Accommodating requests**
2.	**Acknowledging 'funding' *[sources, issues]***
3.	**Acknowledging accountability**
4.	**Addressing minority interests *[identities, film]***
5.	**Advising**
6.	**Affirming suitability *[of self, others, an organisation, films etc.]***
7.	**Affirming stereotypes**
8.	**Aggrandising festival**
9.	**Aggrandising self**
10.	**Answering back**
11.	**Archiving *[filmic/TV representations, festival iterations, community history/sub-cultures]***
12.	**Articulating 'festival' *[aim, ethos, purpose – what they are and what they should be]***
13.	**Assessing priorities**
14.	**Assimilating experience *["learning on the job"]***
15.	**Attracting filmmakers**
16.	**Attracting funding**
17.	**Avowing specialist-knowledge *[(queer) cinema literacy, (diverse) queer communities]***
18.	**Balancing community interests *[L/G/T/Q/BME/sub-cultures – advocacy, representations and concerns of each]***
19.	**Balancing stakeholders**
20.	**Balancing/tailoring content *[aesthetic value vs. commercial vs. community representations]***
21.	**Benchmarking**
22.	**Benefitting from involvement**
23.	**Blurring boundaries**
24.	**Blurring festival boundaries *[i.e. film festival or queer arts/cultural festival]***
25.	**Breaking in *[becoming a 'newcomer', and then a regular]***
26.	**Bringing community together**
27.	**Budgeting**
28.	**Building community**
29.	**Building relationships**
30.	**Celebrating**

31.	**Challenging stereotypes**
32.	**Changing attitudes**
33.	**Claiming festival *[as individual and community 'right'- "our festival"]***
34.	**Clarifying**
35.	**Collaborating**
36.	**Combating invisibility**
37.	**Commemorating**
38.	**Committing *[to org/festival/role]***
39.	**Communicating *[formal and informal, within and across organisation as well as reaching out to industry and wider communities]***
40.	**Community networking *[actively and consequentially]***
41.	**Comparing festival**
42.	**Compromising**
43.	**Congregating *[in a space]***
44.	**Connecting communities**
45.	**Consolidating communities *[e.g. creative / queer]***
46.	**Constructing community space**
47.	**Contributing to community**
48.	**Coordinating**
49.	**Courting [potential] sponsors**
50.	**Crafting programme**
51.	**Creating partnerships**
52.	**Creating visibility**
53.	**Criticising**
54.	**Cultivating new talent**
55.	**Cultivating community**
56.	**Curating *[festival/programme]***
57.	**Dealing with change *[principally 2011 cuts]***
58.	**Dealing with uncertainty**
59.	**De-formalising**
60.	**De-formalising relationships**
61.	**Delegating**
62.	**Delineating suitability *[of self, others, an organisation, an event/film; and the 'idealised' versions of each of these]***
63.	**De-politicising events/actions**
64.	**Developing (own) career**
65.	**Differentiating festival *[from other festivals]***
66.	**Differentiating identities *[L/G/B/T/Q/ BME/sub-cultures, and their divergent interests]***
67.	**Differentiating self**
68.	**Disagreeing**
69.	**Displaying passion**
70.	**Driving success**
71.	**Educating next generation**
72.	**Educating outsiders *[non-attendees and also the queer public at large]***

73.	**Employing social media**
74.	**Empowering new-comers**
75.	**Empowering others *[i.e. Dyke March]***
76.	**Enacting events *[not organisation]***
77.	**Enacting organisation**
78.	**Encouraging newcomers/periphery**
79.	**Endorsing value of festival**
80.	**Engaging with activism**
81.	**Erasing differences *[identities – L/G/T/Q & BME; queer & non; LLGFF and other mainstream festivals]***
82.	**Eroding stereotypes**
83.	**Evaluating others**
84.	**Evaluating/judging film**
85.	**Experiencing frustration**
86.	**Expressing history/tradition**
87.	**Facilitating networking**
88.	**Facilitating newcomers**
89.	**Filmmaking**
90.	**Forgiving mistakes**
91.	**Formalising**
92.	**Fostering sense of belonging**
93.	**Fulfilling a duty**
94.	**Gatekeeping**
95.	**Gifting labour**
96.	**Giving back *[to LGBTQ communities, forbearers, industry stakeholders, filmmakers]***
97.	**Guarding boundaries**
98.	**Having fun**
99.	**Helping others**
100.	**Heroicizing**
101.	**Identifying invisibility *[i.e. those sectors of LGBTQ communities absent from the festival (or not catered for), LGBTQ cinema or mainstream film/television]***
102.	**Industry networking**
103.	**Informal communicating *[word-of-mouth]***
104.	**Institutionalising**
105.	**Interacting**
106.	**Involving others**
107.	**Juggling**
108.	**Labelling *[i.e. as professional]***
109.	**Leading**
110.	**Learning**
111.	**Legitimising**
112.	**Maintaining consistency *[i.e. of 'what festival is about']***
113.	**Maintaining friendships**

114.	**Managing volunteers**
115.	**Managing expectations *[of audience, community, BFI, filmmakers, delegates, industry and other stakeholders]***
116.	**Managing talent**
117.	**Marketing**
118.	**Meeting expectations**
119.	**Minimizing risk**
120.	**Misbehaving**
121.	**Multi-tasking**
122.	**Negotiating boundaries**
123.	**Negotiating deadlines**
124.	**Negotiating role-specifications**
125.	**Operating as mission-orientated**
126.	**Organising**
127.	**Overcoming obstacles**
128.	**Pampering delegates**
129.	**Perceiving 'fit'**
130.	**Perceiving altruism**
131.	**Performing a 'role'**
132.	**Performing unskilled [support] tasks**
133.	**Perpetuating collective memory**
134.	**Perpetuating in-group**
135.	**Planning**
136.	**Pledging love of film**
137.	**Politicising events/actions *[or festival]***
138.	**Possessing**
139.	**Preserving history/tradition**
140.	**Procuring deals**
141.	**Projecting *[anticipating future changes]***
142.	**Promoting diversity**
143.	**Promoting festival**
144.	**Protecting**
145.	**Providing opportunities**
146.	**Providing platforms *[i.e. for filmmakers or community groups]***
147.	**Pursuing projects**
148.	**Pursuing/promoting own interests**
149.	**Pushing boundaries**
150.	**Putting festival before self**
151.	**Reaching out**
152.	**Reciprocating favours**
153.	**Recognising ability**
154.	**Recognising cultural norms**
155.	**Recognising limitations**
156.	**Recognising opportunities**
157.	**Recognising stereotypes/preconceptions**

158. Recognising tastes *[of others, communities or interest groups]*
159. Recommending others
160. Recruiting
161. Recruiting via insiders
162. Reflecting
163. Remembering
164. Re-presenting
165. Representing *[communities, sub-cultures, BFI, LGBTQ cinema, industry]*
166. Researching
167. Resolving problems
168. Risk-taking
169. Safeguarding *[past, community, neophytes, and the festival's future]*
170. Scheduling
171. Script-reading
172. Seeing self *[representations that identify with]*
173. Seeking advice
174. Seeking community / belonging
175. Seeking funding
176. Seeking opportunities
177. Self-depreciating
178. Self-justifying
179. Self-promoting
180. Self-sacrificing
181. Separating space
182. Sharing
183. Showcasing
184. Socialisation
185. Spanning boundaries
186. Stimulating discussion
187. Storytelling
188. Strategizing
189. Streaming audience *[i.e. to 'correct' film for their interests, tastes and (queer) cinema literacy]*
190. Supporting *[community, festival]*
191. Team-working
192. Tastemaking
193. Transgressing norms
194. Understanding diverse queer communities
195. Undertaking administration
196. Utilising tools *[i.e. Googledocs, viewing library]*
197. Validating community
198. Validating festival
199. Veiling 'the industry'
200. Volunteering
201. Working without structure

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethical approval for this project was sought from and granted by the University of St Andrews University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC). The application was reviewed and approved by the University of St Andrews School of Management Ethics Committee (on behalf of UTREC). The ethical approval letter is attached overleaf as Figure 67.

Notably, the project title listed on the letter subsequently changed. This reflects the emergent nature of this research and represents a change of title only, not of project. The project undertaken is the same project for which ethical approval was granted and relevant aspects of the project (i.e. fieldwork and data collection/storage/analysis) were not altered.

Although individual consent was sought regarding interviews, permission was also sought to access the research site. This was requested via e-mail to the 'Head of Research and Scholarship' at the BFI (also an Honorary Professor at Glasgow University Centre for Cultural Policy Research). His approval was granted via e-mail, but with the request that: upon completion a hard copy of this thesis is deposited with the BFI Library; and that I am subsequently available to meet to discuss my findings with the BFI's Marketing Department, if they should so wish.

Figure 67: Ethical Approval letter

University of St Andrews

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

22 March 2012
Elizabeth Irvine
School of Management

Ethics Reference No: *Please quote this ref on all correspondence*	**MN8540**
Project Title:	The tensions of organisational and aesthetic practices in a UK film festival
Researchers Name(s):	**Elizabeth Irvine**
Supervisor(s):	**Dr Paul Hibbert**

Thank you for submitting your application which was considered by the School of Management's Ethics Committee. The following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form 19 March 2012
2. Participant consent form
3. Participant debriefing form
4. Participant information sheet

The University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) approves this study from an ethical point of view. Please note that where approval is given by a School Ethics Committee that committee is part of UTREC and is delegated to act for UTREC.

Approval is given for three years. Projects, which have not commenced within two years of original approval, must be re-submitted to your School Ethics Committee.

You must inform your School Ethics Committee when the research has been completed. If you are unable to complete your research within the 3 three year validation period, you will be required to write to your School Ethics Committee and to UTREC (where approval was given by UTREC) to request an extension or you will need to re-apply.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECguidelines%20Feb%2008.pdf) are adhered to.

Yours sincerely

Dr Philip Roscoe
Convenor of the School Ethics Committee

cc Shona Deigman

UTREC Convenor, Mansefield, 3 St Mary's Place, St Andrews, KY16 9UY
Email: utrec@st-andrews.ac.uk Tel: 01334 462866

APPENDIX 4: LLGFF FEEDBACK REPORT

Research findings will be communicated at the appropriate juncture to the LLGFF via deposition of a copy of this thesis within the BFI National Library (as requested by the BFI Head of Research and Scholarship). Furthermore, a feedback report will be provided that summarises the research aims and findings of this study alongside a description of 'practical actionable insights' that have emerged from this project. As indicated in sub-section '1.2 – Practical Insights' of 'Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions', this element of the report is included in the below table.[187] The practical insights indicated in this figure are considered thematically (according to the structure adopted in 'Chapter IV: Findings'), followed by general insights and a 2014 addendum.

Figure 68: 'LLGFF Feedback Report: Actionable Practical Insights arising from Research Project'

LLGFF Feedback Report: Actionable Practical Insights arising from Research Project
SAFEGUARDING-RELATED INSIGHTS
Although ostensibly a celebration of 'the best in contemporary new queer cinema', it is evident that the LLGFF plays an important and enduring role as a visible focal point of queer community building and cultural expression and consumption, for both LGBTQ and queer-film-industry communities. The significance of the LLGFF as a site of collective community 'space' and 'cultivation' is readily recognised by multiple key stakeholders in the organisation of the festival. However, the festival's nuanced value to these communities must be safeguarded in order to secure its own preservation. **Safeguard the value of the archive strand of film programming:** The LLGFF holds a relatively unique position as a major LGBTQ cultural

[187] The grammatical voice utilised in this report does not acknowledge the 'within and below' researcher but, rather, is written in a removed and impersonal manner, more typical of most 'reports'.

event, certainly within the UK. Therefore, it is one of few institutional organisations involved in large-scale mainstream: commemoration (and capture) of LGBTQ collective cultural histories; presentation of alternative historical narratives; and consolidation of LGBTQ collective and cultural memory. Thus, it is clear that the archive strand of film programming has particular value and, indeed, further potential as a mechanism for preserving and engaging with LGBTQ histories and traditions. In the face of financial cuts and a much shorter festival the archive strand has survived and this project would suggest that it is an indispensible facet of the LLGFF. Evidently, archive cinema (and historically focused documentaries) and educational events exploring histories and sub-cultures have a role in the cross-generational transmission of LGBTQ collective experiences through identity-based arts festivals, a transmission of great value to these communities. Their continued inclusion thus relates to the festival's perceived 'legitimacy' and value for LGBTQ communities.

Enlist academics or other invited speakers for educational talks:

On a related note, this dimension of the LLGFF could be fruitfully extrapolated into new forums in the future. For instance, by reaching out to LGBTQ youth organisations or university groups through dedicated and orchestrated 'concession' archive screenings teamed with an educational talk. These could take place during an otherwise unused time-slot so as to have little or no impact upon the existing programme outwith the costs incurred by the screening itself (no venues were in use in the mornings and on weekdays the two smaller theatres were usually not used until 6pm). Additionally, London hosts several renowned Film Studies university departments and queer-interest academics could be drawn into presenting their work (recompensed for expenses only) through the associated prestige of the BFI and the resulting enhancement of their (potentially REF rewarded) public engagement outside of academia. Similarly, more historical LGBTQ cultural and political anniversaries could be actively 'remembered' through programming or events planning.

Consider the festival as an archiver and beacon of (queer) culture:

It may also be possible to expand the role of the LLGFF as an 'archiver' of contemporary queer (sub-)cultures, concerns and cinema, through enhancement of the preservation of the records of the LLGFF itself, such records constituting a queer cultural artefact in themselves.[188] Furthermore, the BFI-endorsed festival signifies a

[188] Notably, in recognition of the BFI's cultural significance, the AHRC funded the cataloguing and digitisation of a selection of BFI records from 1933 to 2008. This project was hosted by the School of History at Queen Mary University London and has recently been completed. This initial project noted that the BFI's own records 'were in a surprisingly sorry state' but are now available for consultation at the BFI National Library and may be available on-line in the future. A series of interviews with 'key past and

trusted evaluator of queer cinema. Thus, each festival iteration could potentially contribute to the safeguarding of a visible queer-cinema canon that is accessible to those outwith socialised queer-cinephile circles. However, digital preservation and presentation of festival information is currently somewhat erratic, inconsistent, limited and difficult to locate. Two relevant examples are given below.

One, the BFI hosts the LLGFF website. Although this is effectively 'replaced' each year some information relating to previous iterations (e.g. film copy, programmer interviews) is retained upon the BFI server space, albeit without an immediately apparent order or driving purpose. Currently, this preserved content is not readily accessible via the BFI website or through the BFI's own website-search tool. A focused search utilising an external search engine does, however, elicit limited results. Secondly, since 2009 partial recordings made at some of the Q&A sessions during the festival have been hosted online at the dedicated 'LLGFF' series of 'BFI Live'. This seemed to be gaining momentum (of the 56 videos 20 relate to the 2012 festival) but puzzlingly there have been no submissions during or even following the 2013 festival. As discussed within the study, this would normally operate as an important link with non-attendees (some of whom may be potential future attendees) and particularly with wider film and LGBTQ communities (a digital link of notable importance for those outwith London). Nevertheless, an interesting recent addition that contributes to the archiving of LGBTQ engagement with the LLGFF has emerged in the use of social media for marketing and direct communication with attendees, queer- and film-community groups, and the wider interested public (i.e. it is possible to search back through Twitter or Facebook accounts but this record only extends a few years into the past).

Engage LLGFF as a (far-reaching) beacon of queer cinema:

Although the LLGFF is already widely held as an arbiter of queer cinematic tastes, its full potential as an accessible archive of queer cinema is currently unfulfilled. A possible project to preserve the festival's records through dedicated integrated web-pages and/or an online portal has enormous potential far beyond hosting the materials outlined above. This could pull together: current-festival information; festival records; the BFI Live LLGFF series; aspects of the 'Beautiful Things' collection from the *Mediatheque*; social-media content; and links to the BFI's immense filmic records. Furthermore, filmmakers, critics and film scholars could be encouraged to contribute written and video content (i.e. relating to festival or queer-cinema history, akin to the *Researchers' Tales: Richard Dyer* piece currently hosted on BFI Live). A digital version of the existing 'memory board'

present BFI personnel, [...] politicians, civil servants, BFI governors and senior and junior staff" were also conducted but primarily 'off the record' and so only a selection are available for consultation. See <http://www.history.qmul.ac.uk/research/research-projects/british-film-institute-research-project>.

could also be a way in which to elicit community engagement and feedback as well as 'memories'. Of course, the potential implementation of this project would depend upon both how the festival remit is conceptualised (as considered in more detail within the study) and also the ability or willingness to meet costs relating to development, maintenance and data storage, which organisational decision-makers (BFI or LLGFF) may be unwilling to cover if they feel this is beyond their remit. Nevertheless, the scope/scale of this potential project could be negotiated and shifted to align with a commonly understood remit. Furthermore, the most relevant aspects could be implemented, or even incorporated into the BFI/LLGFF's online presence via existing IT infrastructures. The main sponsor of the LLGFF is consultancy firm *Accenture*. It may be possible, given their corporate social responsibility commitments and specialist technology division, to approach them to perform some pro-bono work in (re-)designing and implementing the necessary IT infrastructure. Further potential aspects of the virtual project will be elaborated upon, where appropriate, below.

Safeguard organisational memory through staffing:

It is pertinent to note that much of the temporal glue which bonds the iterations across time and emits an enduring sense of 'festival' resides within a core group of individuals with a protracted involvement with the festival. It is pertinent to recognise this and the potential impact of a significant change in festival staffing.

LEGITIMISING-RELATED INSIGHTS

As the study has indicated, the festival's legitimacy is continuously consolidated in three key dimensions: one, the fulfilment of the differing conceptualisations of the festival (A, B, C); two, the success and value of each *individual* iteration for myriad stakeholders; and three, the affirmation of the festival's future role and significance.

Capture and engage with feedback:

In order to ensure the LLGFF's continuing legitimacy, it is imperative to capture, document and safeguard the legitimising mechanisms for each of these three dimensions, and to further record the (evolving) value of the LLGFF to wider communities and to the BFI. Furthermore, these mechanisms could be reflexively adjusted through active engagement with feedback and the exploration of trends and anomalies. To this end, data analytics would provide a useful revelatory tool. This

could be used to, for example, explore the relationship between BFI membership and LLGFF footfall, or to support the festival's efforts in striving to fully recognise stakeholders. Similarly, the prospective digital 'memory board' previously discussed could secure a (partial) digital archive of any festival's oscillating value to its different attendees.

Identify and safeguard key festival differentiators:

In safeguarding the LLGFF's reputation as a legitimate high-brow LGBTQ-film festival of note, it is important to identify and protect the key differentiators that support it as such: informative first-hand exposure to other queer festivals abroad and the resulting networking opportunities for programmers; the avoidance of other festivals' pitfalls such as the group 'scoring' system; and the autonomy granted to its highly-socialised programmers.

Identify and maintain aspects which contribute to professionalism:

Similarly, the importance of key structures and systems that buttress the professionalism of the LLGFF as an institutionalised festival must be recognised, as the example of the reaction to the lack of industry services in 2011 indicates. The value of industry provision has been shown to be indispensible and is an expected facet of any professional festival of such scale and standing. Additionally, from the perspective of the audience, any threats to the professional conceptualisation of a festival should be addressed: in the case of the LLGFF, the principal failing is the reviled (annual) problems with the BFI booking system.

Engage further with community stakeholders:

As explored in this study, interview participants and festival literature proudly extol a community-facing image of the festival. This by proxy 'national' LGBTQ-film festival is inextricably interlinked with the LGBTQ communities that it serves and partially publically-funded (via the BFI); and, thus, accountable to those communities in a complex manner. The festival's activities and value are not in question in this regard. Nevertheless, there are steps that could be taken in order to address inconsistencies and to enhance, and further legitimise, this role.

The extent of involvement with groups and organisations from the wider queer community is delimited by the contextual boundaries of the festival, as explored in the study. However, in best fulfilling a vision of the festival as community centred, the LLGFF could further develop some aspects of their community provision. For instance, the vacant time slots and spaces previously indicated could be put to use by existing community partners (e.g. queer arts organisations or *Broken Rainbow* [LGBT domestic violence and abuse charity]) for

events or information sessions. Furthermore, additional community organisations could be drawn into the LLGFF and encouraged to offer (free) events or a physical presence, even if simply via information stands. Similarly, the incorporation of scholars/historians/cultural commentators exploring LGBTQ culture/histories would greatly enhance numerous facets of the LLGFF.

Utilise available labour power for research:

More comprehensive engagement of volunteers could be a lucrative venture with minimal expenditure for any festival (LLGFF volunteers were recompensed at a rate of £12 per day in 2012). In this context, this additional labour power could be commissioned to undertake research, generating insights from data analysis that could be useful in, for instance, assessing the success of multiple legitimising mechanisms.

Extend function of LLGFF as a visible (legitimising) LGBTQ emblem:

Furthermore, as argued throughout this study, whether experienced directly through attendance or indirectly through knowledge of its very public part in the wider queer cultural landscape, the LLGFF operates as a safeguarding and legitimising beacon of queer culture and communities. This role as a visible ambassador of 'LGBTQ' could be extended; the credibility of the LLGFF could be further harnessed and exploited according to evolving community concerns through increased or more direct engagement with mainstream media.

GATEKEEPING-RELATED INSIGHTS

Attend to media-sensitive timescales:

Given the importance of the LLGFF as a connective community space and fecund site for cultural expression, institutionalisation and consumption, it is pertinent to examine the barriers of access to this site. A general prohibitive factor has been the limited time between the Press Release and the commencement of the festival, which hampers attempts to reach out as festival publicity and programme information cannot be readily included in prominent monthly lesbian and gay publications.

Consider audience and those who are 'absent':

The casual observer may take the festival as a microcosm of the LGBTQ populace but in reality, at times, the festival appears more as a microcosm of London-dwelling, middle-class, educated, professional, middle-aged lesbians and gay men. Whilst some members of the festival-organising community acknowledged this in interviews, attempts at reaching out to more diverse segments could go further.

Principally, those potential audience members who are geographically displaced from central London or marginalised by the dominance of relatively expensive ticketed events/films are excluded from the activities of the LLGFF. This could be somewhat addressed by the re-instatement of the 'LLGFF on Tour' and a commitment to offering more free community-based events.

Reconsider the (potential) spatial reach of the festival:

The possibility of a dispersed 'simultaneous festival' could be also explored whereby some films from the LLGFF are screened during the same 'festival period' at an arts cinema with which the BFI has a relationship (e.g. the Glasgow Film Theatre or the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre). Similarly, the feasibility of a simultaneous 'online festival', with 'pay-per-view' streaming of festival films and live-streaming of Q&A sessions could be explored (although this would not offer a collective cinematic viewing experience, online discussion and digital engagement may offer aspects of this and it could generate revenue) and could be a potential facet of the online portal proposed herein. Through this, a queer-cinephile community could be cultivated across the UK, perhaps even eliciting a future festival audience. Furthermore, for those community members who are anxious about publically/physically attending a LGBTQ film-festival, such a system would provide a valid or safe space for exploration and cultural consumption.

Directly target under-represented audience segments:

Older and younger community members are conspicuously absent from most aspects of the festival. Engaging (more fully) with community organisations that interact directly with these pockets of the queer populace (such as the current community partner *Opening Doors: Supporting Older LGBT Communities in Central London*) presents an opportunity to reach out to these groups. Collaborative endeavours could include a dedicated *Mediatheque* tour or setting aside 'block' tickets to an archive film for sale via a target community partner. Furthermore, care should be taken to sensitively adapt to the specific concerns of these groups. For instance, specifying that no festival photographer will be present could be reassuring

for a young person that has not yet fully 'come out' to family members or an older individual whose past experiences have made them anxious.[189]

Reach out through social media:

Youth outreach activities could be strengthened through a more pronounced year-round engagement with social media. For instance, through Twitter or Facebook: posting links to short clips developed from the *Beautiful Things* collection; publicising relevant documentary/film material in response to trending articles or hashtags; or greater online collaboration with long-established or significant community groups such as *Stonewall* or *LGBT Youth Scotland*. This role could even be filled on a voluntary basis or through the engagement of a marketing intern (this could be unpaid but it may be possible to make use of current government initiatives that part-fund and advertise part-time internships for graduates). The proposed online portal could even have a dedicated youth section if considered appropriate.

Continuously examine the balance of gatekeeping:

As highlighted in the study, industry-community space and attendance at industry-networking events or professional training events is reserved for those deemed worthy of inclusion. Whereas gatekeeping must underpin the successful enactment of a festival, attention must also be paid to ensuring the balance does not tip towards segregation and isolation at the expense of key practices such as securing the margins & facilitating newcomers. This study has shown the pervasive nature of gatekeeping and exploiting connections in securing both paid and unpaid positions with the LLGFF (and would suggest that this is likely to be mirrored in most festivals). For all festivals, the web of existing associations may be impenetrable to someone lacking a point of connection to the network and a sense of nepotism may prevail, perhaps even deterring someone on the fringes wishing to break in from applying. Nevertheless, in the case of the LLGFF this plays a protective role in ensuring that members of the progressively inner-circles of the festival-elite are suitably socialised to relevant aspects of queer cinema, LGBTQ culture and festival patterns/norms prior to further infiltration (for instance, prospective programmers would have to be socialised to the 'codes' utilised in festival copy to implicitly denote a film's character).

[189] For instance, the researcher is involved in running a LGBTQ university alumni association. Some of the older attendees of alumni events (i.e. aged 55+) have expressed anxiety regarding photographs of events (i.e. questioning whether they may be stored digitally or shared online) and, in some cases, do not wish to be photographed at all.

CONNECTING-RELATED INSIGHTS

Attend to lone attendees:

Multiple ways in which to further the festival's connective potential for disparate elements of LGBTQ communities are outlined within the study and thus will not be elaborated upon here. Given the somewhat 'lonely' nature of observation-centred aspects of fieldwork, the researcher is very able to comment upon the experience of going to the festival alone as well as observations of lone attendees. Although the LLGFF presents a faultlessly warm and welcoming image, a significant aspect that all festivals should consider is that many individuals would not relish the prospect of going to an event/film or spending time completely alone. Whilst by no means a function of the LLGFF's remit, it seems unfortunate to successfully draw in a community member but for them to feel disengaged and perhaps not repeat their visit.

Create spaces for informal discussion:

Collective viewing is both empowering and fun (depending, of course, upon the film) and this experience could be used as a basis upon which to foster connections between and within different communities and elicit engagement. For instance, some films screened during quieter periods could be followed by an informal discussion in an unused space or even in the café area of the Benugo Bar. Furthermore, as the festival does not begin until midday and the Benugo Bar opens at 10am, late-morning informal film-discussion gatherings over coffee could easily be included in the programme and even tailored to under-represented segments (i.e. older people/retirees could be targeted through specific organisations or media channels). Given the socialisation of volunteers to queer cinema, these sessions could be volunteer-led/steered/supervised and so would not incur any real financial costs beyond the opportunity costs of the use of the space.

Utilise 'empty slots' for partner/community-based activities:

In a similar vein, community organisations could engage in outreach activity of their own during these festival 'quiet periods'. The richness of several members of the festival-organising community's involvement with community groups could be additionally exploited in prompting greater engagement with these groups at the festival.

Provide further opportunities for connection between industry and audiences:

Given the scarcity of queer-film festivals in the UK with extensive industry provision, the LLGFF provides an almost unique point of connection between the queer-film industry and their UK audiences. Thus, opportunities for large-scale cross-communities communication at festival Q&A sessions and events such as the *Weekend* (Dir: Haigh; UK, 2011) 'signing' can be seen to be important for both communities. Furthermore, for films shown as works-in-progress, such 'feedback' is invaluable to filmmakers.

Ensure sensible access to networking opportunities:

Conversely, although perhaps veiled from the majority of LGBTQ community attendees, the severance of community and industry space may create dissonance between some of the rhetoric employed in the festival and the experience of attending the festival itself. For those involved in the queer-film industry, the LLGFF offers a relatively unusual space for fostering professional connections in the UK and thus industry provision is a critical facet of the festival in honouring its commitment to the community. Evidence of this can been seen in the purposive introductions and active stewardship undertaken in order to maximise the impact and value of professional networking but, as indicated in this study, the barriers to such valuable professional networking space are tightly guarded. It is crucial to ensure a balance between the mechanisms underlying access and control.

Consider educative scope:

The somewhat impenetrable nature of the rich yet dense cultural and historical terrain continuously (re)shaped by generations of LGBTQ communities means that there exists a real need for signposts in connecting LGBTQ communities with their 'shared' (and differing) histories/cultures.

The festival facilitates meaningful navigation; in part through cross-generational learning and the crafting of an implicit curriculum that guides 'study' of LGBTQ cultures. When reaching out to younger community-members for whom this may be more of a connecting 'introduction', the content of this educative role could be made more explicit. As previously indicated, the potential LLGFF online portal could cement the festival's position as a point of connection to LGBTQ collective histories, as well as providing web-links to queer cultural organisations and film-distributors, an interactive queer cinematic timeline and key-word search (i.e. to facilitate consideration of significant queer historical or cinematic 'moments' as well as filmic depictions of past eras).

Similarly, given that the majority of the audience at the *Mediatheque* event highlighted in the study were already familiar with the facility it may be pertinent for festival staff to reconsider the manner in which this event is marketed in the

programme, in order that the festival's role in connecting LGBTQ communities with their historical selves could be further expanded.

NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES-RELATED INSIGHTS

Recognise the importance of staff willingness to engage with complex contractual arrangements:

The LLGFF makes use of complex part-time and flexible-working arrangements with full-time BFI staff members to fill a number of key paid festival roles. However, although specific contractual engagements attempt to mediate the enactment of spanning multiple roles, the reality is that the activities of this practice are, for these individuals, continuous throughout the year and these multiple roles are performed in an ever-shifting balance and, at times, concurrently (not without a degree of tension). Evidently, the ability and willingness of these individuals (and also those whose full-time position is not with the BFI) to enter into such contractual agreements is an enabling mechanism for the festival, as is their readiness to contribute a substantial volume of what is effectively gifted labour. Ultimately, this cross-employment further blurs the intra-organisational boundaries between the BFI and the LLGFF and perhaps lends a sense of security.

Formalise volunteer positions as (unpaid) internships:

The festival's widespread reliance upon goodwill and hard-working volunteers is clear. Despite volunteers' passionate engagement with the festival, it is imperative that the value of skilled and socialised volunteers is recognised and that steps are taken to secure their continued involvement. This could be through a formalising of some roles into internships (whether unpaid or funded) or even ensuring that contact is maintained throughout the year so that they feel a part of the festival-organising process. Skilled and socialised volunteers are clearly an asset.

Exert caution when amending the 'skeleton' of the festival programme:

The festival-organising community is certainly adept at recognizing (potential) stakeholders, as well as the evolution of the latter's circumstances and how this may spark the need for organisational change. The already complex and multi-layered blurring of boundaries around festival scope and purpose that ultimately shape the festival programme is further complicated by the act of balancing the festival programme so as to suitably represent LGBTQ sub-cultures.

Achieving this delicate balancing act requires extensive socialisation to: festivalship; programming; LGBTQ socio-political concerns; movements/motifs of queer cultural expression; and the history of LGBT and queer cinema. Given the longevity of the festival and the historic nature of several of its integral facets, great care should be taken in making any amendments (particularly significant ones) to this winning formula. The current format is extremely popular and the LLGFF purportedly performs better than many of its high-brow comparators. There is an inherent danger in upsetting this delicate balance by drawing too far away from films that fulfil a finance-generating or pastoral/representative role, or from those that contribute artistic weight to the festival programme.

Capture a variety of feedback relating to programme balance:

Thus, as with all festivals, in sustaining a successful balance from one iteration to the next, it is crucial to reflexively engage with both formal and informal festival feedback from both film and audience communities. To this end, if there is not already a system in place it would be advisable to also start capturing data from social media for subsequent analysis. Similarly, as comments of industry figures regarding some topics differed significantly from those of other groups, it would be pertinent to seek a wide spectrum of formal and informal feedback from different stakeholders within the queer film industry. Informal feedback could also be captured through industry forums or interactions linked to industry social-media channels (e.g. public and industry 'replies' to LGBTQ distributor Peccadillo Pictures' 'tweets' via Twitter during the festival).

Provide explanatory/media-friendly information packs to staff/delegates in order to avoid misunderstandings:

The complexity of the festival — the unclear edges of its form and purpose, the blurred relationship with the parent institution, the opaqueness surrounding who the festival is ultimately accountable to, the plurality of its aims and telos, its multiple and overlapping stakeholders and ambiguity regarding finances — generates a richness but does lead to confusion. Several participants, even those in senior roles, articulated inconsistent and at times clashing accounts of central issues such as financing and the precise nature of the relationship with the BFI. This was reflected in a jarring incident, outlined below, that occurred during the Q&A session for *Stud Life* (an East-London queer community crowd-funded project). The importance of safeguarding the queer-film industry through (self-)investment in cultural production by LGBTQ individuals (whether a formal investment or donation) was highlighted by the film's director, who cited difficult funding conditions given the current general scarcity of film-funding and widespread unwillingness to invest in projects with a specific minority-market appeal. An audience member (that I recognised as another film-director/writer/producer who

had previously shown her work at the LLGFF) then stood up and began an angry tirade against the festival. She made the accusation that the LLGFF/BFI was making profits from the hard work of queer cultural producers instead of 'reinvesting' their 'profits' into the film industry (in reality the festival receives a subsidy from the BFI in order to 'break even'). Given that this ambiguity is prevalent at even senior levels of the festival-organising community, it may be pertinent to circumvent the possibility of public misinformation or misunderstandings by providing media-friendly information packs to volunteers, industry delegates (including filmmakers), temporary staff members (and even programmers) and those seconded from the BFI.

GENERAL INSIGHTS

This report has indicated a number of thematic-based practical insights. The potential for a dedicated integrated LGBTQ film-culture and community interactive portal hosted by the BFI has been suggested at various points throughout this study. My conceptualisation, outlined throughout this report, relates to a dedicated portal (or area of the BFI web pages) hosting tailored content that pulls together:

- archive material (e.g. LLGFF records spanning its now almost 28 year history, films and related contextualising elements such as Q&As or film-criticism articles)
- accessibly written material from academia, especially film studies and history (e.g. mapping a canon/map of historical and contemporary LGBTQ film; written pieces or interviews that examine a film/genre/theme/star etc., including clips from the 'Beautiful Things' collection from the *Mediatheque*)
- current festival information (e.g. programme and event information)
- concurrent 'online' festival (e.g. streaming of films and live-streaming of Q&A sessions) and information regarding the potential concurrent regional 'satellite' festivals previously highlighted
- a digital 'memory board'
- forums and links to LLGFF and BFI social-media channels
- links to (approved) relevant community groups
- interviews with festival programmers, filmmakers and film scholars
- information and links for prospective or nascent filmmakers regarding how to get involved or relevant training programmes (i.e. the *Skillset* sponsored sessions at the 2012 LLGFF)
- online 'meet-up' forum for lone festival attendees

ADDENDUM, March 2014:

During the period of fieldwork, as noted, the LLGFF interacted online through social media and also through posting some of the Q&A sessions on the BFI Live online video channel. However, in October 2013 the BFI launched an online video-on-demand service, the 'BFI Player', in a pilot form. This is a non-subscription service offering a (currently) limited variety of free and pay-per-view streaming of shorts and films from the BFI archive, searchable by genre, 'trending' or collection.

On 19 February 2014 a new collection was unveiled (at the 2014 festival launch) to showcase LGBTQ-interest material, entitled 'BFI Flare' to correspond to the 2014 renaming of the LLGFF as 'BFI Flare'. This BFI Player collection includes 'Gay Cinema Out of the Archive' (containing some free and also inexpensive shorts and features from the BFI National Archive) and also 'BFI Flare presents' (which includes some free-to-view Q&A sessions and rentable films from previous festivals). However, as this online service is in its infancy, it is not especially easy to navigate nor to locate material and the volume of material currently hosted is extremely limited. Nevertheless, the intention of the BFI is to add significantly to the entire player over the next five years and this service has huge potential.

With regards to the dedicated integrated LGBTQ film-culture and community interactive portal suggested by the researcher as a practical contribution of this project, this new element of IT infrastructure could be either incorporated into the conceptual proposal previously outlined above or could be used to host the video content and linked to a dedicated web space containing the other aspects discussed above. Notably, in their current forms, the 'BFI Flare' website and the 'BFI Flare' collection (on the BFI player) do not, for instance, host: interactive forums; real-time or live streaming (i.e. of Q&As, panel discussions, events etc.); or concurrent paid online access to those films included in the current festival iteration (i.e. films from the 2014 festival are not available to stream online during the 2014 festival).

The launch of the BFI Player represents a shift in the operating model of the BFI. The inclusion of the 'BFI Flare' collection was not only of great significance for LGBTQ communities and filmmakers but also represents a laudable firm commitment to these groups. Adding to the existing IT infrastructure and/or amalgamating these ideas has great potential to enable the festival to fulfil its potential and reach in a previously unprecedented manner for various communities.

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